THE JUICY TRUTH OF BIBLICAL WINE

BY

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INTRODUCTION

"To drink, or not to drink: that is the question." As much as the Bible refers to alcohol and the dangers of drunkenness, why do people struggle with this question? Before making it through the first five books of the Old Testament, the reader is confronted with the word "wine" in both positive and negative references. Continuing through the rest of Scripture only validates the confusion over the issue of whether alcoholic beverages may be consumed by God's people.

"Wine" is found from Genesis 9:21 with Noah's drunkenness to the end judgments on Babylon in Revelation 18:3. The focus of the issue on wine in the Bible revolves around whether every case refers to alcoholic wine or whether wine could also mean a nonalcoholic drink. Surprisingly, the English word "wine," found in the King James Bible and other English translations, is used to translate at least ten different Hebrew words and at least two Greek words. A study of these different words for wine in the original languages will lay the groundwork for this study on whether wine in the Bible was solely alcoholic or not. This issue also requires background and cultural study to arrive at a valid conclusion.

As the morality of this world continues to wane, believers need to know what the Bible teaches about wine and fermented drinks. Studying the different Hebrew and Greek words for wine, the process and use of wine in Bible times, and the Biblical view of wine will guide the believer to a clearer understanding of this muddy issue.

THE BIBLICAL WORDS FOR WINE

The foundation of Scripture rests in Its very words. Since God inspired the entirety of Scripture (II Tim. 3:16), God, not man, chose the words that refer to wine. The translators of the King James Version used the single word "wine" to translate several different Hebrew and Greek words that God uses throughout the Bible. While this is not an inaccurate translation by any means, today's dominant association with wine is an alcoholic beverage. This main association did not come until the 1800's. Charles Wesley Ewing, in his book *The Bible and Its Wines*, shows that English dictionaries from the early 1700's defined wine as liquid from grapes, without attaching words like "fermented" to its definition.[1] While fermented wine was implied by some of the definitions, they were not the predominant usage at that time. Today's culture has changed the understanding of wine to be exclusively an alcoholic drink.

Some believe that the attempt to show the Hebrew and Greek words revealing both fermented and unfermented wine is futile. G.I. Williamson, in his book *Wine in the Bible & the Church*, says, "A careful study of the Hebrew and Greek terms reveal [sic] no such distinction [between fermented and unfermented wines] in Scripture."[2] While the words in the original languages of the Bible are not exclusive in the distinction between fermented and unfermented wine, examining the different words and meanings can give some general guidelines and be found profitable.

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[1] Charles Wesley Ewing, *The Bible and Its Wines* (Denver: Specialty Publishing, 1985), 2.

[2] G.I. Williamson, *Wine in the Bible & the Church* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1985), 10.

The Hebrew Words and Meanings for Wine

A quick glance in *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* shows around two hundred times that the English word "wine" is used in the Old Testament.[3] About ten different Hebrew words make up this list. The most common word is "yayin." This word is the generic use of the term "wine." William Patton's book, *Bible Wines or The Laws of Fermentation*, quotes several professors and books which demonstrate the fact that "yayin" can refer to either fermented wine or unfermented grape juice.[4] In Genesis 9:21, Noah drinks "yayin" and becomes inebriated, clearly indicating it can refer to an alcoholic wine. Isaiah 16:10, on the other hand, says that "the treaders shall tread out no wine [yayin] in their presses." Since wine cannot become fermented while still in the grape, it only makes sense that the wine tread out of the grapes is unfermented. "Yayin," as unfermented wine in particular contexts, gains credence from rabbinic writings of the past. *Encyclopaedia Judaica* mentions "newly pressed wine, prior to fermentation" as being called "yayin mi-gat."[5] Already, evidence can be seen supporting the belief that not all wine referred to in the Bible is alcoholic.

"Tirosh," another Hebrew word translated as wine, sheds even more light on the distinction between two wines in the Bible. Strong defines "tirosh" as "must or fresh grape-juice (as just squeezed out); by implication (rarely) fermented wine; new, sweet wine."[6] "Must," according to *The American Heritage College Dictionary, Third Edition*, means "the juice expressed from fruit." Isaiah 65:8 uses this word in the phrase, "As the new wine [tirosh] is

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[3] James Strong, *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990), 1220-1221.
[4] William Patton, *Bible Wines or The Laws of Fermentation* (Little Rock: The Challenge Press, n.d.), 47.
[5] Cecil Roth, ed. *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, Israel: Keter Publishing House, 1971), 16:538.
[6] Strong, *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, 124.

found in the cluster," giving Scriptural proof that this word identifies, at least, unfermented wine. Micah 6:15 also shows that "tirosh" refers to what is immediately pressed from grapes. Only Hosea 4:11 allows for the possibility of "tirosh" being held in a negative sense. Taking this verse into consideration, Ewing still concludes, "From the foregoing testimony of Hebrew Scholars, and the use of tirosh in the Scriptures, it is this writer's firm conviction that tirosh is never fermented. If it becomes fermented it is no longer tirosh."[7] With or without accepting the Hosea passage as nonalcoholic, few can dispute that the dominant use of "tirosh" in the Old Testament refers to grape juice.

While several other Hebrew words translated as "wine" could be examined, the point that both fermented and unfermented wine exist in Scripture has already been made. Other words like "shekar," "enab," "asis," and "chemer" would help to support the distinction of wines in the Bible but are not necessary to examine for the current argument.

The Greek Words and Meanings for Wine

In addition to the Hebrew of the Old Testament, the Greek of the New Testament also gives validity of two wines in the Bible. Just as "yayin" is a general use of the word wine, including the meanings of fermented or unfermented, the Greek word "oinos" serves the same purpose.[8] Revelation 17:2 says, "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine [oinos] of her fornication." In this case, the Bible clearly implies that "oinos" is fermented since the people become drunk from it, even though the passage speaks metaphorically. Stephen Reynolds, who wrote *The*

[7] Ewing, *The Bible and Its Wines*, 23.
[8] Ibid., 63.

Biblical Approach to Alcohol, demonstrates how "oinos" must also be able to refer to unfermented wine. According to Reynolds, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, uses "oinos" to translate "yayin" in Isaiah 16:10 and "tirosh" in Proverbs 3:10. Both of these passages refer to grape juice in the Old Testament.[9] Even though examining the different Hebrew and Greek words used for "wine" in the English Bible cannot give an absolute, exclusive distinction between alcoholic and nonalcoholic wine in Scripture, the fact that both do exist can be seen.

THE MAKING AND USE OF WINE IN BIBLE TIMES

After looking at the Biblical words for "wine" in the original languages, the reader must next consider the making and use of wine in Bible times in order to determining whether Scripture condones or forbids the use of alcoholic beverages. Upon initially studying this area, the writer of this paper became disappointed upon reading reports declaring that all wine in Bible times had to be fermented since there was no refrigeration or method of preventing it. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* states, "There apparently were no attempts made to preserve wine in an unfermented state.…Some scholars are of the opinion that unfermented wine was impossible in ancient times in Palestine."[10] *The Lion Encyclopedia of the Bible* makes no mention of preserving the grape juice in ancient times but rather implies all wine was fermented.[11] The discouragement of these findings faded as more detailed sources on this issue were consulted.

[9] Stephen M. Reynolds, *The Biblical Approach to Alcohol* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), 43.

[10] Merrill C. Tenney, ed., *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), 5:938.

[11] Pat Alexander, ed., *The Lion Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Tring, England: Lion Publishing, 1986), 221.

The Preservation of Wine

Despite what some books ignorantly say, the people living in Palestine during Bible times used several different methods to preserve wine in the unfermented state. Samuele Bacchiocchi, in his book *Wine in the Bible*, even goes as far to say that "the ancients were far more knowledgeable in the art of preserving fruits and wines than is generally presumed."[12] Without modern refrigerators or ice, how could people of the past keep their wine in the unfermented state? William Patton explains that for wine to become alcoholic there must be the right levels of sugar, yeast, temperature, and consistency.[13] Any alteration of these conditions can potentially keep the juice from turning into an alcoholic drink. Later, he lists four main means used by the ancients for preserving wine as unfermented: boiling, filtration, subsidence, and fumigation.[14] He states that with boiling grape juice, "the water is evaporated, thus leaving so large a portion of sugar as to prevent fermentation."[15] People have boiled grape juice into syrup since before the birth of Jesus Christ.[16] The resulting syrup could be stored for months until ready for use. At that time, water would be added to turn the concentrate syrup back into a drinkable juice, unfermented.

In addition to boiling, the other means were variably successful in preserving the wine. While the methods of filtration and keeping the juice cool show the ingenuity of people in Bible times, the fumigation process magnifies their expertise on preserving grape juice. By bringing the juice into contact with sulphur dioxide fumes or items containing sulphur preceding sealing and

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[12] Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Wine in the Bible: A Biblical Study on the Use of Alcoholic Beverages* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Biblical Perspectives, 1989), 106.
[13] Patton, *Bible Wines*, 14
[14] Ibid., 23-34.
[15] Ibid., 23.
[16] Bacchiocchi, *Wine in the Bible*, 115.

storage, the oxygen would be removed from the air in the container and prevent fermentation.[17] While these examples of preservation of wine in ancient times only give a quick survey, the point is made that people preserved unfermented wine.

The Attitude towards Wine

Unlike the alcohol-crazed world of today, history reveals a different preference between alcoholic wine and grape juice among the majority of people centuries ago. The boiled wine, which required water to be added to the resulting syrup, seems to have been a choice drink in ancient times. Patton quotes Aristotle, born in 384 B.C., to Archbishop Potter, born in A.D. 1674, as having been familiar with cultures widely using boiled wine.[18] How popular was unfermented wine in the Jewish culture? The *Mishna*, the oral Jewish teachings put into written form around A.D. 200, mentions boiled wine as a common part of Jewish life.[19] Patton quotes from a letter by Professor M. Stuart, "facts show that the ancients not only preserved their wine unfermented, but regarded it as of a higher flavor and finer quality than fermented wine."[20] The attitude towards wine was favorable of the unfermented type.

The Uses of Wine

While wine's primary use would be a liquid drink, many other uses were found in this product. When wine is boiled, it turns into thick syrup as the water evaporates. This sweet syrup

[17] Patton, *Bible Wines*, 34.
[18] Ibid., 24.
[19] Ibid., 25.
[20] Ibid., 44.

was known to be used as a substitute for sugar and butter.[21] Just as people today use molasses or honey to put on bread, this grape syrup could also be placed on foods. In an article for *Christianity Today*, Robert H. Stein, though holding to the belief that wine in the Bible does not refer to nonalcoholic grape juice, effectively gives a valid use for fermented wine. He initiates the article by explaining that the wine of Bible times did not have near the amount of alcohol as today's wines made in a distillery. Stein states that instead of boiling or filtering water in order to make it safe to drink, people commonly mixed wine with their water.[22] The slight alcohol content could be enough to kill harmful bacteria. For stomach ailments, such as what Paul seemed to indicate that Timothy had, unfermented grape juice is actually the best remedy, second only to orange juice, since alcohol diminishes the positive affects.[23] By glancing through the many uses for unfermented and only slightly fermented wine, one can easily see its importance in the lives of people centuries ago.

THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF WINE

After examining the different Hebrew and Greek words for wine and the cultural making and use of wine in Bible times, the reader must finally understand the Biblical view of wine. Upon an initial reading of Scripture and finding only the single English word "wine," an incorrect conclusion can be understandable. In light of what has been discussed, though, the Biblical view of wine should come into focus. Just as the letters G-O-D can mean the one true God and Creator of all things or a false supreme being, wine can have a positive and negative

[21] Bacchiocchi, *Wine in the Bible*, 120.
[22] Robert Stein, "Wine-Drinking in New Testament Times," *Christianity Today*, 20 June 1975, 10.
[23] Peter Masters, *Should Christians Drink?* (London: The Wakeman Trust, 1992), 68.

definition. Context is the key to unlocking whether a passage refers to fermented or unfermented wine.

The Negative References to Wine

Context makes the negative references to wine very clear in Scripture. Since grape juice cannot result in inebriation, any reference to the wine causing drunkenness means the wine is fermented. Noah's drunkenness in Genesis 9:21 clearly resulted from alcoholic wine and had part in Ham's sin and Canaan's curse. In Genesis 19, Lot's two daughters use wine to intoxicate their father in order to commit incest with him. Alcoholic wine is also blatantly spoken out against. Proverbs 20:1 calls alcoholic wine "a mocker" and "raging" by context. Proverbs 23:29-35 gives a grave description of the wrong type of wine. The Bible clearly forbids people to even look upon this type of wine. In the New Testament, Ephesians 5:18 says, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." These and other passages of Scripture clearly give negative references to wine which are determined by context to be fermented.

The Positive References to Wine

While many references to wine are negative, others are plainly positive. As with the negative, context quickly reveals God's attitude towards this type of wine, which is believed to be unfermented. In Genesis 14:18, the first positive reference to wine in the Bible has Melchizedek bringing bread and wine to meet Abraham. Leviticus 23:13 mentions wine as part of an offering to God. In Daniel, wine is mentioned among the lists of blessings from God. In

the Gospels and I Corinthians, believers are even commanded to observe the Lord's Supper with unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. While many attempt to show that Jesus used alcoholic wine, the Bible refutes such an idea. Jesus Christ came to fulfill the Law (Matt. 5:17). According to the Law, no leaven was even allowed to be in one's home (Exod. 12:15). Leaven is synonymous with yeast, the very substance which makes and exists in fermented wine. Since leaven pictures sin and corruption, the bread AND THE WINE in the Lord's Supper could not have had any leaven or fermentation. Christ's use of the words "fruit of the vine" also distinguishes the wine from the fermented type. Looking through the whole of Scripture the split between negative and positive references to wine concludes that two different types of wine are addressed. The key to distinguishing the difference rests in the context.

CONCLUSION

After examining the Biblical words for wine, the process and use of wine in Bible times, and the Biblical view of wine, one can designate two different types of wine in Scripture. The Hebrew and Greek words, though not exclusive in every case, reveals a distinction between fresh grape juice and fermented wine. The historical accounts in secular writings only support the division of two types of wines. In light of the linguistic and historical information, the Bible's use of "wine" becomes clear when context is taken into account.

The dangers of alcoholic wine and blessings of grape juice declare the need for believers to separate from fermented drinks. The countless homes and lives destroyed by alcohol have not even been addressed in this paper. The number of alcohol related automobile accidents also have not been given to support abstinence from alcohol. The testimony of Scripture alone should be enough to bring believers to a decision to refrain from alcoholic beverages. General Robert E. Lee agreed with the Bible when he said, "My experience through life has convinced me that abstinence from spirituous liquors is the best safeguard to morals and health."[24] The issue of wine is not about standards but sanctification and refraining from sin.

[24] Alban Douglas, *One Hundred Bible Lessons: God's Answers to Man's Questions* (Macedonia, Ohio: Bible Believers Bookstore, 1966), 254.

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Is it Alright For Christians To Drink Alcohol?

(Reasons from the Bible)

by Gary T. Panell

"Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, saying: 'Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. *It shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations, that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them by the hand of Moses" (Leviticus 10:8-11). "*It is* not for kings, O Lemuel, *it is* not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink; lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted" (Proverbs 31:4-5).

After citing these Bible passages Jerry Dunn and Bernard Palmer, authors of *God is for the Alcoholic,* continue:

"Priests were ordered not to drink during their course in the Temple so they could tell the difference between the good and the bad. Kings and princes were not to drink for the same reason. They were to abstain from drinking so they could tell the difference between right and wrong and be fair in their judgment of the people who came before them.

"The book of Revelation states that those who have accepted Christ as Savior are kings and priests: '[.and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.]*' (Revelation 1: 5-6)

"The apostle Peter also says that we became kings and priests. We are members of a royal family. '[But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.]*' (1 Peter 2:9)

"Because of our salvation through faith in Christ we have become sons, the adopted sons of the King. As such we are members of the King's family, and the orders that went out to the kings and priests apply to us. We are not to drink so that we will have clear judgment and discernment as God's representatives in this world.

'As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' Jesus told His disciples (John 20:21b). As Christians we are sent to witness, to teach the people. This is the responsibility of the believer. '[Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,]*' the Lord Jesus Christ instructed His disciples (Matthew 28:19). In order to teach we must know the difference between right and wrong.

"Therefore I believe that we as Christians are not to drink alcohol.

"On one occasion after I presented this thesis to a youth group a young man got to his feet. 'The Bible says that the priest isn't supposed to drink when he's in the Temple, but what about when he's outside the Temple? It doesn't mention that.'

"'That's true,' I told him. 'But the Bible also says, '[For you are the temple of the living God]*' (2 Corinthians 6:16b). As believers we are always living in God's temple. We are to think of ourselves as serving God daily in the temple of our bodies, and to do this we must so live as to be usable to Him.'

"The Christian does not drink because he knows the Lord Jesus Christ personally and is a member of His family. The Christian is a king and a priest, and the Bible specifically says that kings and priests are not to drink. The matter of total abstinence, then, depends upon our love for the Lord Jesus Christ. How much do we love Him?" (*God is for the Alcoholic* by Jerry Dunn with Bernard Palmer)

*Originally quoted from the Amplified Bible, changed to the New King James Version for readability.

I agree with these statements to a point, and I believe Mr. Dunn gave an excellent answer for us as Christians today, and I would highly recommend this book, but I would like to go further and answer the young man's question about priests and other believers' use of alcohol in the Old and New Testaments.

I would like to comment, first, that this warning to the priests was a warning given to them specifically about the tabernacle or temple service; and that it came after two men Nadab and Abihu died for drinking alcoholic wine while on duty, causing them to become careless and offer "strange (or profane) fire before the LORD."

I say this because it is in this same context (in Leviticus 10: 1-11) that these two men were killed. This is an example of what the Lord thinks about believers drinking, and showing deadly consequences that can come from drinking. "Ancient Jewish interpretation taught that they were intoxicated when they came before the LORD, which intensified the gravity of their actions (Leviticus 10: 9)." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*) So this passage is not teaching that it was only wrong for priests to drink while on duty, but rather the seriousness of drinking alcoholic wine.

I would like to show that there were other warnings also in both the Old and New Testaments, to the average believer not to drink alcohol, and that these warnings were not just directed or restricted to priests or kings. We will see in this study, too, how we can help people with alcohol addiction today.

However, to start with I would like to give a little background to my own life and why I have come to these conclusions, that there are Biblical reasons from the Old and New Testaments why a Christian should not drink alcohol. I will do this, to begin with, by answering some questions

that were asked of me through the years on our interactive web Bible Study at Bible-Christian.org.

This is a translation of a letter we received about our tract on Wine in the Bible:

"Many people think that the Bible is in agreement with drinking alcohol." this is how you start your tract. This is not really true that the Bible is not talking about alcohol when the word "wine" is used. Look, you say that the term "wine" is unique in the Bible and is what is referred to in all the Scriptures (that it can be fermented or unfermented depending on the context). Here are my arguments against this view:

"My example in Genesis is when the daughters of Lot gave their father wine so they could have children by him. If this was only grape juice what effect would this have on him?

"Fermented wine is good for stomach problems; this is what Paul told Timothy. And Solomon wrote about wine and how it makes the heart happy. You also speak about the prevention of spoilage by various methods, but this has to be fermented wine in order to be preserved.

"The Bible condemns drunkenness because this is in excess. This causes negative changes in a person, and this is what Solomon teaches. It is wrong for kings to drink wine, but in all the cases it is the same wine. The fermentation is a chemical process that begins the moment it leaves the vine. The wine is obtained from the "must" of the juice. Already in this same grape you find the enzymes capable of transforming the sugars to form the wine.

"Then I would like to say that to drink a cup of wine after a good lunch is not bad, nor anything people should condemn. The problem comes when one drinks wine with other motives. As I have already said it is wrong to drink to get drunk, this is very bad.

"Where you talk about the context, it is very ambiguous. It seems that you are saying that in every place that something good is happening it has to be grape juice, but when it is bad, it is speaking of fermented wine. The Bible is precise and clear, and I cannot be in agreement with this kind of interpretation.

"Thanks, write back to me.

The following is a quotation from my response:

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your comments. Many Christians have the same view as you, but very few of them will actually write. I understand that your position is that all the wine in the Bible, every time it is mentioned, is speaking of a fermented drink. Then too, you feel it is not wrong to have a glass of wine after your meal.

I do not want to answer this question on an academic level only, because I believe it goes beyond that, to the spiritual. So after some discussion on a personal level, I will get down to some specifics from the Bible.

First, the reason I began to search this subject out is because as a Christian growing up, we were at that time told it was wrong to drink alcohol, but we were given very few Biblical reasons. So when I got into the military I began to experiment with beer. I found out it did not take long for it to get the upper hand. I do not believe anyone starts out to become an alcoholic, but it does not take long for most people to start to have problems with alcohol. However, many young people today do go out to get drunk, they are not thinking about drinking only a little. Still they do not think that they will become an alcoholic.

I believe those parents who drink only a little are setting a bad example that will lead their children astray. The parents who drink only a glass after a meal influence their children or others who may not be able to drink only one glass. Then, too, even a glass once in awhile can start to build an ethyl alcohol addiction in our bodies. I believe that even the little my dad gave me before he became a Christian, could have caused my body to have a longing for more alcohol.

The following are the arguments people come up with most often when they think it is ok to drink as Christians. If they have any knowledge of the Bible at all, they will usually question things like, "Did Jesus drink wine?" "Did Jesus make wine for a wedding?" "Why did Paul tell Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake?" And then and interesting argument that is not related to the Bible, they say, "All Christians in Europe drink alcohol." I have heard these arguments from those just starting out on the road to drinking, and from alcoholics alike. They feel these arguments justify their drinking.

So this is the reason I wanted to know for myself what the Bible had to say on the subject. Let us start with the last argument. All Christians in Europe drink alcohol. First, I do not believe this is true, but even if the majority of them do drink, is what Christians do in Europe our standard? I believe the Bible is our standard. Martin Luther said, "Solo la Biblia!" This means that the Bible is our only standard. So we need to see what it has to say, not talk about what other Christians do.

The other arguments have been discussed in my tracts on the subject of alcohol, but I do want to go over some things here. Like the argument that says all wine in the Bible is fermented. If this were the case, why would we be told in Proverbs 23:31-32 not to look at the wine when it is fermented, "Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper." In, Isaiah 16:10b it says, "...no treaders will tread out wine in their presses." As soon as the juice was pressed out of the grapes it was called "wine." So to assume that every time the Bible uses the word "wine," it is talking about a fermented drink is not looking at the facts.

Many people assume that the word "wine" in the Bible always means a fermented drink because in English most people think fermented when they hear the word "wine." The same thing is true in Spanish for the word "vino." If you go to the "modern" dictionary for the meaning of wine it

will say something like, "The fermented juice of any of various kinds of grapes, usually containing from 10 to 15 per cent alcohol by volume."

This is where the problem arises for people studying the Bible only in their language, but not in the original languages of the Bible. The word most often in Greek in the Bible texts is "*oinos,"* and in Hebrew it is "yayin." These words have historically been used to refer to the juice of the grape, whether fermented or unfermented. (For more on background information of the Hebrew, Greek and English usages of the word wine, go to Dr. Bacchiocchi's web site.)

In Genesis, where Lot and Noah got drunk on it, it is obviously fermented. I might add, note how it got them both into trouble by drinking fermented wine. Yes, after a time, depending on the temperature and the conditions grape juice will ferment or spoil. It is clear from reading the book *Bible Wines* by William Patton that most people tried to preserve their grape juice as long as they could, and did not want it fermented.

The fermented wine was considered inferior to the fresh grape juice (wine). This observation can help us understand the nature of the "good wine" produced by Christ at the wedding of Cana (John 2:10). He produced fresh grape juice, which would have been a very welcome gift at a wedding in Israel at that time. [We go into more detail on this miracle of Jesus creating (wine) grape juice later in the article.]

In his book ***Bible Wines,*** Patton goes into great detail how they could keep their juice fresh longer. I have shown in my other article, Beer and Other Alcoholic Beverages in the Bible, that people in Bible times did know how to preserve their grape juice, so it would not spoil or ferment, and they did this even without refrigeration"

To preserve their sweet juices in a hot climate, people often boiled the juice down until it was thick like syrup, and later when they were ready to use it they would add water to it. Also they would boil their juices and, then seal the air out. There were other methods to prevent fermentation like filtration or by drawing off the juice from the subsided yeast, and by the use of sulfur. They could, at times keep juice in a cool place such as in a cave, underground or in water. For more on this subject read, Bible Wines, by William Patton or Wine In The Bible: A Biblical Study On The Use Of Alcoholic Beverages, by Samuele Bacchiocchi.

In his article Bacchiocchi talks about the way people preserved their grape juice. I might say he goes into much historical detail, and it is an excellent study. He explains that it is a myth to think that in Bible times it was easier to store fermented wine than it was to store unfermented wine. Bacchiocchi explains how they did not understand the causes of fermentation; this was not clearly understood until the 1860's, when Louis Pasteur undertook his study of fermentation. So the truth is, in reality it was far more difficult for them to store fermented drinks, than it was to store grape juice.

So let us not assume it is speaking about an alcoholic drink when the word "wine" is used in the English Bible. One must go to the context, verses before and after the word, to see if fresh grape juice is in question or fermented grape juice. Sometimes the wine is fermented, and we can see the difference, depending on the context.

We need to do our homework; this is the way it is in a lot of Bible study. For example, the religious leaders said that the Messiah had to be born in Bethlehem, and concluded Jesus was not born there because he grew up in Nazareth. They did not even bother to check it out for themselves. We need to check things out for ourselves; Paul commended the Bereans because they checked with Scripture to see if what he was saying was so. "These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so." (Acts 17: 11)

I know that what I am teaching flies in the face of what many of the churches teach. But my question to you is, "Are you willing to check it out for yourself, or are you going to assume that the churches are always right?" You might be interested to know that these same churches did not always teach that it was all right to drink alcohol in moderation. Look at their historical doctrines, and you might be surprised at what you find, probably even in your own church. And look at how much heartache it has caused in Christian homes, since they did start teaching it was ok to drink in "moderation."

I believe this is the reason that even some translations of the Bible have been translated the way they were in some references to alcohol, and that is because of the prevailing views of alcohol in the society when a translation is made. Reading in the Greek and Hebrew you see a view of fermented or "strong drink" as harmful, not helpful, with the exception of using it to pour on a wound. (Luke 10:34) or using it for a dying person to kill the pain (Proverbs 31: 6). Even as they offered it to Jesus on the cross, but when He had tasted it he would not drink it, Matthew 27:34.

Also Proverbs 31: 7 says, "Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." "At first this advice seems to contradict such prohibitions as in Proverbs 23:31. However, it is obvious in context that the advice is given in irony to those who have drifted so far from God as to be 'appointed to destruction' [die, or Lit. "*sons of passing away" NKJV*] anyway, Proverbs 31:8." (Dr. Henry M. Morris *Defender's Bible*)

Some people think that all believers drank alcohol in the Bible so they bring up passages like this one in 1 Samuel. Here it talks about when Hannah was at the tabernacle praying for a baby, "And it happened, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli watched her mouth. Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought she was drunk. So Eli said to her, 'How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you!' But Hannah answered and said, 'No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit.

"I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. Do not consider your maidservant a wicked woman, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief I have spoken until now.'" (1 Samuel 1:12-16) She was not drinking a fermented drink or getting drunk, because she did not want to be considered "a wicked woman."

You also mentioned Timothy was told by Paul, to take a little wine for his stomach's sake and not to just drink water. We know Paul was speaking here of grape juice which is good for your stomach, your heart, and the rest of your body. He was not telling him to drink a fermented wine, because this would have been bad on his stomach and digestive system. Some say a little wine is good for your heart, but it has other side effects that are not good for you, when you could drink

dark grape juice. It will have healthy benefits for your heart, without the negative side effects on the rest of your body. (Welch's website.)

Alcohol also causes bad effects on the muscular, skeletal, nervous, and circulatory systems as well. Deuteronomy 32:33 says, "Their wine is the poison of serpents, and the cruel venom of cobras." So the Hebrew word (chemah) is translated as "poison" when speaking of fermented wine in this passage of Scripture.

You mentioned that Solomon said it makes the heart "merry," I believe you could be referring to, Ecclesiastes 8:15, "So I commended enjoyment, because a man has nothing better under the sun than to eat, drink, and be merry; for this will remain with him in his labor all the days of his life which God gives him under the sun." This is really speaking of living life, as Solomon did for a time, without the thought of the hereafter. Many people today think this way also. That is where we get the saying, *Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die."* This is not really a Christian philosophy!

This is not the Christian's view of life, but the world's view of life, "under the sun," so to speak. At the end of Solomon's life he realized his errors, and says at the end of the book, "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:1a, 13, 14)

There is nothing wrong with enjoyment or merriment, and Scripture makes it clear that men enjoy drinking "grape juice," it gives me pleasure to drink it. We do not need to have a "high" from fermented wine or alcohol; we need to have the high of the Holy Spirit. When I was drinking in the military I was high for a little while, then I had the morning after to contend with. I would much rather drink non-alcoholic drinks and have my health as I have today. Also, my testimony is at stake, and I want to be sober for the Lord!

You mentioned Lot, and said his daughters gave him wine. It was fermented wine, of course, but he was sinning when he did this. He also had incestuous relations with his daughters as a result of his drinking, Genesis 19:30-38. He would not have done this if he had not been drinking, and the girls knew that. If you look at all the places in Scripture where people drank fermented wine, it caused problems for them. You may be able to drink a glass after supper and stop there, but this is not the case for the vast majority of people.

Solomon says in Proverbs: "Hear, my son, and be wise; and guide your heart in the way. Do not mix with winebibbers, *or* with gluttonous eaters of meat; for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe *a man* with rags. Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old.

"Buy the truth, and do not sell *it, also* wisdom and instruction and understanding. The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, and he who begets a wise *child* will delight in him. Let your father and your mother be glad, and let her who bore you rejoice. My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways. For a harlot is a deep pit, and a seductress *is* a narrow well. She also lies in wait as *for* a victim, and increases the unfaithful among men." (Proverbs 23:19-

28) [I believe God is using a harlot here as an example of how alcohol is seductive. Comment by G. T. Panell]

"Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper.

"Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things. Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying; 'They have struck me, but I was not hurt; they have beaten me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?'" (Proverbs 23:29-35)

Dr. Bacchiocchi shows in his study that: "The drinking problem in America [U.S.A.] today claims at least 100,000 [+].lives per year, 25 times as many as all illegal drugs combined. Since the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, most churches have abandoned their stand for total abstinence, encouraging "moderation" instead. Unfortunately, moderation has led over 18 [+] million Americans [U.S.A.] to become immoderate drinkers, because alcohol is a habit-forming narcotic which weakens one's capacity for self-control."

If all our parties only offered soda and good non-alcoholic drinks, we would have a lot fewer deaths on the highways. We would have a lot fewer murders. We would have a lot fewer sexual abuse cases, and a lot less home violence! Whenever I go to a party here or in Mexico, I have to say, "No thank you" many times when they offer me a drink of alcohol. I say, "A soda will be fine for me, thanks." Television and the media tell our kids that wine is the key to sophisticated entertaining. Television tells our kids beer is part of sports. The most powerful medium in the world brings beer and wine into our living room and makes us comfortable with them!

The Bible says, "Wine is a mocker [obviously fermented here], Strong drink is a brawler [causes violence], and whoever is led astray by it is not wise." (Proverbs 20:1) A 1987 Gallup Poll indicates that 1 in 4 families are troubled by alcohol. This means that more than 61[+] million Americans are affected by some alcohol-related problems such as retarded children (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome), divorce, and violence in the home, crime, sickness and death.

I personally know from firsthand experience what it can do to a person, through my use of alcohol in Vietnam. It was not until I got back to the States, married and started attending church again regularly, that I got my life straightened out with the Lord. Even now I have to be very careful. A number of years ago, I drank one Margarita, and I almost went back into drinking. Thank God, I have not tried that again. (Later in the article we will talk about addiction, and what can be done to help those in need.)

Some people might ask why I do not explain the differences between different drinks and their percentages of alcohol; also why we do not go into the fact that Bible drinks were not distilled. The reason I do not talk about these differences is because if you realize that a typical 12 ounce can of beer is just as "strong" as a glass of wine or a cocktail with liquor. The fact is that 12

ounces of beer, a 5 ounce glass of wine, or 1 ¼ ounces of liquor all contain the same amount of pure alcohol.

People may not think about the financial giant we are up against in fighting alcohol, but let me give you a personal example. We live in Washington State in a place that is now called, "Wine Country." That probably tells you how many types of grapes that are grown here for wine use. We also grow the most hops of any place in the world, as you may know; it is the main ingredient for beer. My suggestion to the farmers is, why not sell your grapes to Welch's Grape Company which produces no fermented drinks, and God has prospered them. I believe He would do this for you if you would trust Him.

Because of its healthy nourishing properties, grape juice (unfermented) was fittingly used to represent the divine blessing of material prosperity in places in the Bible. Here are just two of the many examples of this: "Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine." Genesis 27:28; "Then Israel shall dwell in safety, the fountain of Jacob alone, in a land of grain and new wine; His heavens shall also drop dew." Deuteronomy 33:28, even though the word wine is used, we know that grape juice is referred to by the context.

Also Christian churches bear a lot of the responsibility for the inestimable human tragedy. Through their beliefs, teachings and preaching they are able to influence the moral values and practices of our society, probably more so than any other institution.

However, most churches teach that Scripture approves of the moderate use of alcohol, but prohibits immoderate use of it. This could not be further from the truth! I would comment, "With this kind of teaching no wonder we have so many problems with alcohol in our Christian homes today!" The Bible teaches total abstinence from alcoholic liquors, or temperance as it used to be taught.

You mentioned in your letter that kings were not supposed to drink at all because it would cloud their judgment. In Revelation 1:6, we are called kings and priests, according to Scripture, kings or princes were not to drink fermented wine or intoxicating drink (Proverbs 31:4,5). We are also told that priests were not to drink any wine or intoxicating drink when they went into the tabernacle (or temple) (Leviticus 10:9-10). Then in the Church Age we are told, in 1 Corinthians 3:16, "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you." Let us keep this temple, our bodies, holy for the Lord!

The following are related questions and the answers given:

Is Paul endorsing the consumption of alcoholic beverages when he instructs Timothy to drink wine for his stomach's sake in I Timothy 5:23?

We do get a little insight into how the early apostles lived by looking at I Timothy 5:23. Here Paul tells Timothy, "No longer drink only water, but use a little wine (grape juice) for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities." They seem to be so afraid that if they drank any grape juice it might be fermented, that they would not even try it. At least this is the experience

of Timothy. Paul was suggesting that a little grape juice would be good for Timothy's stomach. My doctor tells me that the dark Concord grape juice is also good for my heart. He suggests a couple glasses a day.

It seems the disciples of Jesus went on the verses from the Old Testament like Proverbs 23:31-32, "Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper."

Please explain Deuteronomy 14:26 to me. I have been doing an internet search regarding alcoholic beverage consumption and what the Bible has to say. This one verse has really perplexed me because this is the only time I have seen a possible endorsement of intoxicating liquors in the Bible.

Thanks for asking the question about alcohol and the Bible. The Bible is very clear on this subject; I will give you the "short" answer. The word "wine" in our English Bible does not always mean a fermented drink. The main Hebrew word for "wine" (since the Old Testament was written in Hebrew) is "yayin" (what is pressed out). The verse you are asking about (Deuteronomy 14:26) is very straight forward. It uses this Hebrew word "yayin" which means "grape juice". Remember that this word is almost always translated as "wine" whether the grape juice is fermented or not. When we think "wine", we always think "fermented", but this is not the case. The word "wine" in the Bible is a generic term. The context (words before and after the word wine) indicates whether it was fermented or not. For some examples of this, look at Isaiah 65:8. Grape juice is called "wine" when it is still in the grapes on the vine, where it is impossible to be fermented.

So to assume that every time the Bible uses the word "wine" it is talking about a "fermented drink" is not looking at the facts! Another example of this is found in Isaiah 16:10b where it says "...no treaders will tread out wine in their presses..." As soon as the juice was taken out it was called "wine."

Now I would like to finish answering your question on this specific reference, Deuteronomy 14:26. God wanted these believers to tithe on everything, including their fresh grape juice (look at verses 23b and 26). Here God is saying if it is too far to travel from your house to the place of worship with these things, you could sell them right away and take the money instead. Then when you get there, you can buy the same type of things, fresh grape juice, etc. Then you can rejoice before the Lord. That doesn't mean to get drunk, but to enjoy the food and grape juice you have bought for your family. The New King James Version of the Bible is the best to read when discussing this area of alcohol, it is the most accurate on this subject.

I guess I didn't isolate the part that bothered me. It is the other drink mentioned. The New King James says "wine or similar drink". The Old King James says "wine or strong drink". The Complete Jewish Bible says "wine, other intoxicating liquor." One source I read says the noun in Hebrew means an intoxicating drink. Where did the New King James get "similar?" I was raised in a Baptist church and never ever heard a word about this verse. Do you disagree with the meaning of the Hebrew word for the other drink mentioned with wine?

Yes, I do stand by the New King James Version translation "wine or other similar drink". I do this for two reasons: first, having been raised in a Baptist church (I myself was an M.K. & P.K.) you will know that one does not make a doctrine out of one verse. The rest of Scripture is very clear on this subject. I hope you had a chance to look at my articles and the other web sites listed there. Second, the NKJV used the 1967/1977 Stuttgart edition of the Biblia Hebraica, based on the Ben Asher text, while frequent comparisons were made with the Bomberg edition of 1524-25. The Septuagint (Greek) Version of the Old Testament and the Latin Vulgate also were consulted. In addition to referring to a variety of ancient versions of the Hebrew Scriptures, the New King James Version draws on the resources of relevant manuscripts from the Dead Sea Caves. You can read more of these quotes from the front of a good NKJV.

Christ's first miracle was the turning of water into wine at the marriage feast. I was always taught that the wine was unfermented. The wine that Lot's daughters drank was fermented, etc. I guess the bottom line is that I was taught that when it was used in a good way in the Bible it was unfermented, when used in a bad way it was fermented. I believe that Scripture does not contradict itself and that if Jesus turned the water into wine, it must be unfermented, as Jesus knew the Scripture and He would not do anything against it. Can you help? Thanks.

Thank you for the question and it is a good one. You are on the right track, you seem like you just want some proof for what you believe. I believe there is proof! Proof that is beyond a shadow of a doubt!

"On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him. 'They have no wine.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, do *it.*

Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the waterpots with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them. 'Draw *some* out now, and take *it* to the master of the feast.' And they took *it.*

When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew) the master of the feast called the bridegroom. And he said to him, 'Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the *guests* have well drunk, then that *which is* inferior; *but* you have kept the good wine until now.' This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him." (John 2: 1-12)

(The following is paraphrased from an article by Dr. Bacchiocchi, Jesus and Wine. The statements in quotation marks are quoted verbatim)

The popular belief that "Jesus was not a teetotaler," but a moderate drinker of fermented wine who even "miraculously manufactured a high-quality (alcoholic) wine at Cana" has

no doubt influenced the drinking habits of millions of Christians around the world more than anything else that the Bible says about drinking.

The reason is simple. The example and teachings of Christ are normative for Christian belief and practice. If Christ made, commended and used fermented wine, then there can hardly be anything intrinsically wrong with a moderate drinking of alcoholic beverages! Simply stated, "If wine was good enough for Jesus, it is good enough for me!"

The belief that the wine Christ provided in Cana was alcoholic rests on five major assumptions. First, it is assumed that the word oinos "wine" indicates only "fermented-quality grape drink, i.e. wine." Second, it is assumed that since the word oinos "wine" is used in reference both to the wine which ran out and the wine that Christ made, both wines must have been alcoholic.

Third, it is assumed that the Jews did not know how to prevent the fermentation of grape juice; and since, as argued by William Hendriksen, the season of the wedding was just before Spring Passover (cf. John 2:13), that is, six months after the grape harvest, the wine used at Cana had ample time to ferment. Fourth, it is assumed that the description given by the master of the banquet to the wine provided by Christ as "the good wine" means a high-quality alcoholic wine.

Fifth, it is assumed that the expression "well drunk" (John 2:10) used by the master of the banquet indicates that the guests were intoxicated because they had been drinking fermented wine. Consequently, the wine Jesus made must also have been fermented. In view of the importance these assumptions play in determining the nature of the wine provided by Christ, we shall examine each of them briefly in the order given...

...The Meaning of Oinos... (The first and the second assumption are really based on this mistaken view that oinos, Greek for wine, always is fermented.)* A better acquaintance with the use of the word 'wine,' not only in the Greek language, but also in old English, Latin and Hebrew, would have saved scholars from falling into the mistaken conclusion that oinos means only fermented wine. The truth of the matter is, oinos is a generic term, including all kinds of wine, unfermented and fermented, like yayin in Hebrew and vinum in Latin. Thus the fact that the wine made by Christ at Cana is called oinos, offers no ground for concluding that it was fermented wine. Its nature must be determined by internal evidence and moral likelihood. The record of the evangelist, as we shall see, affords information for determining this question.

(The first and second assumptions are discredited by two facts.)* First as mentioned earlier, the word oinos is a generic term referring to fermented and to unfermented wine. Second, the wine provided by Christ is differentiated from the other by being characterized as ton kalon, 'the good' wine. This suggests that the two wines were not identical. The nature of the difference between the two wines will be discussed below.

Preservation of Grape Juice: The third assumption, that it would have been impossible to supply unfermented grape juice for a spring time wedding about six months after vintage, rests on the assumption that the technology for preserving grape juice unfermented was unknown at the time.

The latter assumption is clearly discredited by numerous testimonies from the Roman world of New Testament times describing various methods for preserving grape juice. .Preservation of grape juice was in some ways a simpler process than the preservation of fermented wine. Thus, the possibility existed at the wedding of Cana to supply unfermented grape juice near the Passover season, since such a beverage could be kept unfermented throughout the year. "**High-Quality Alcoholic Wine**:" The fourth assumption is that the wine Jesus provided was pronounced 'the good wine' (John 2:10) by the master of the banquet, because it was high in alcoholic content. Such an assumption is based on twentieth-century tastes.

Albert Barnes, a well-know New Testament scholar and commentator, warns in his comment on John 2:10 not to "be deceived by the phrase 'good wine.'" The reason, he explains, is that "We use the phrase to denote that it is good in proportion to its strength, and its power to intoxicate. But no such sense is to be attached to the word here."

.To the Roman world of New Testament times, the best wines were those whose alcoholic potency had been removed by boiling or filtration. Pliny, for example, says that "wines are most beneficial (utilissimum) when all their potency has been removed by the strainer." Similarly, Plutarch points out that wine is "much more pleasant to drink" when it "neither inflames the brain nor infests the mind or passions" because its strength has been removed through frequent filtering.

The wine Christ made was of high quality, not because of its alcohol content, but because, as Henry Morris explains, "It was new wine, freshly created! It was not old, decayed wine, as it would have to be if it were intoxicating. There was no time for the fermentation process to break down the structure of its energy-giving sugars into disintegrative alcohols."

It thus was a fitting representation of His glory, and was appropriate to serve as the very first of His great miracles (John 2:11). **Rabbinical Witness**: The rabbinical witness on the nature of wine is not unanimous. Rabbi Isidore Koplowitz points out in his introduction to his collection of rabbinical statements on wine and strong drink that "it is true that some Talmudic doctors have sanctioned, aye, even recommended the moderate use of wine.

But it is equally true that many Talmudic Rabbins have in vigorous words condemned the drinking of wine and strong drinks. Some Rabbis have even ascribed the downfall of Israel to wine. An example of disapproval is the statement, often repeated with minor variations by different rabbis, which says: "When wine enters into the system of a person, out goes sense, wherever there is wine there is no understanding."

.Elsewhere the Talmud indicates that drinking was forbidden to the accompaniment of musical instruments in festive occasions such as weddings (Sotah 48a; also Mishna Sotah 9, 11). .In the light of these testimonies and considerations we would conclude that the wine provided by Christ was described as "the good wine" because it was not intoxicating.

Moral implications: Another reason leading us to reject the assumption that "the good wine" produced by Christ was high in alcoholic content is the negative reflection such an assumption casts upon the wisdom of the Son of God. .The oinos in this case was grape juice. In the light of

the whole Old Testament condemnation of wine [that was fermented], it certainly would appear that the beverage was grape juice."

It is against the principle of Scriptural and moral analogy to suppose that Christ, the Creator of good things (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25,: Col 1:16), would exert His supernatural energy to bring into existence an intoxicating wine which Scripture condemns as "a mocker" and "a brawler" (Proverbs 20:1) and which the Holy Spirit has chosen as the symbol of divine wrath.

Scriptural and moral consistency requires that "the good wine" produced by Christ was fresh, unfermented grape juice. The very adjective used to describe the wine supports this conclusion. "It must be observed, "notes Leon C. Field, "that the adjective used to describe the wine made by Christ is not agathos, good, simply, but kalos, that which is morally excellent or befitting. The term is suggestive of Theophrastus' characterization of unintoxicating wine as moral (ethikos) wine.

Referring to the nature of the wine produced by Christ, Ellen White says: "The wine which Christ provided for the feast, and that which He gave to the disciples as a symbol of His own blood, was the pure juice of the grape. To this the prophet Isaiah refers when he speaks of the new wine 'in the cluster,' and says, 'Destroy it not: for a blessing is in it'.The unfermented wine which He provided for the wedding guests was a wholesome and refreshing drink. Its effect was to bring the taste into harmony with a healthful appetite."

"Well Drunk." The final assumption to be examined relates to the expression "well drunk" (John 2:10) used by the banquet master. The full statement reads: "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now" (John 2:10, KJV).

The assumption is that since the Greek word methusthosin "well drunk" indicates drunkenness and since drunkenness is caused, according to the statement of the banquet master, by the "good wine" customarily served first, then "the good wine" provided by Christ must also have been intoxicating, because it is compared with the good wine usually served at the beginning of a feast.

This reasoning misinterprets and misapplies the comment of the master of the banquet, and overlooks the broader usage of the verb. The comment in question was not made in reference to that particular party, but to the general practice among those who hold feasts: "Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine." (John 2:10, RSV). This remark, as many commentators recognize, forms parts of the stock in trade of a hired banquet master, rather than an actual description of the state of intoxication at a particular party.

Another important consideration is the fact that the Greek verb methusko can mean "to drink freely" without any implication of intoxication. The verb methusko in John 2:10 is used in the sense of satiation. It refers simply to the large quantity of wine generally consumed at a feast, without any reference to intoxicating effects.

Those who wish to insist that the wine used at the feast was alcoholic and that Jesus also provided alcoholic wine, though of a better quality, are driven to the conclusion that Jesus provided a large additional quantity of intoxicating wine so that the wedding party could continue its reckless indulgence. Such a conclusion destroys the moral integrity of Christ's character.

The Object of the Miracle: The stated object of the miracle was for Christ to manifest His glory so that His disciples might believe in Him. This objective was accomplished: "This, the first of His signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him" (John 2:11).

Christ's presence at a marriage feast was intended to show divine approval of the marriage institution and of the innocent enjoyments of social life. Yet all of these considerations were subservient to the manifestation of Christ's glory in fulfillment of His Messianic mission. The glory of God is revealed especially in His act of creation (Psalm 19:1-2). Likewise, Christ's "eternal power and deity" (Romans 1:20) through an act of creation: "He made the water wine [grape juice]" (John 4:46).

The wine of the miracle must have been identical to the wine found in the grape-clusters, because this is the only wine that God produces. "There is not a hint," writes R. A. Torrey, "that the wine He [Christ] made was intoxicating. It was fresh-made wine. New-made wine is never intoxicating. It is not intoxicating until sometime after the process of fermentation has set in. Fermentation is a process of decay. There is not a hint that our Lord produced alcohol, which is a product of decay and death. He produced a living wine uncontaminated by fermentation."

"I am satisfied," states William Pettingill, "that there was little resemblance in it [wine made by Christ] to the thing described in the Scripture of God as biting like a serpent and stinging like an adder (Proverbs 23:29-32). Doubtless rather it was like the heavenly fruit of the vine that He will drink new with His own in His Father's kingdom (Matthew 26:29). No wonder the governor of the wedding feast at Cana pronounced it the best wine kept until the last. Never before had he tasted such wine [grape juice], and never did he taste it again."

Christ's miracles were always directed to benevolent ends. He "came not to destroy men's lives but to save them" (Luke 9:56). If it were true that Christ miraculously manufactured an intoxicating wine, then that miracle would be a notable exception among His miracles. It would be a malevolent manifestation of His power. He would have manifested shame rather than glory.

Christ was aware of the powerful influence His example would have on contemporary and future generations. If, with all this knowledge He created an intoxicating wine, He would have revealed diabolic rather than divine power and glory. His disciples could hardly have believed in Him, if they had seen Him do a miracle to encourage drunkenness.

[**I agree 100 percent with these statements and would like to add to them that: The Bible says Jesus always did the will of the Father who is in heaven. So He would not disobey God the Father who said by the Holy Spirit, "Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and**

stings like a viper." (Proverbs 23:31-32 NKJV) Also, He would not make people sin by making an alcoholic drink, which we are told not even to look at, let alone drink.

Also, Jesus (being God as well as man) would know about the harmful effects of alcohol, such as Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, and would not give alcohol to a wedding party, which probably included several pregnant women. No, Jesus did NOT make a fermented wine at this wedding. What He did do, was to create and give a wedding gift of at least 120+ gallons of fresh grape juice, thus proving He is the loving Messiah-God, as the theme of St. John points out!]* Comments by G. T. Panell

Thanks for the question and God bless you!

Question: Hello, I was reading your online article about fermented and unfermented wine in the Bible and had a specific question about the passage which I have copied and pasted at the bottom of this message. You said that yayin is unfermented wine or grape juice and then say that Deut. 32:33 tells us that fermented wine is poison. My confusion is Deut. 32:33 uses the Hebrew word yayin to portray that wine was poisonous. It also used specifics here. Saying that Gomorrah's wine was poisonous not that all wine was poisonous. Please help me to understand this interpretation as I am still trying to get a full understanding of whether wine is okay to drink or not. Thank you for your time and consideration. God Bless. -

Thanks for your question. In this verse in Deuteronomy 32:33 from the text and since the word poison is used the Lord is speaking of what they had done with their grape juice and that was to ferment it, and drink it. God shows us what he thought of their wine and that was, it was like gall, bitter, poison of serpents, and cruel venom of cobras, not a positive description by any stretch of the imagination.

God wants to spare us this heartache and trouble, but we need to decide that we will not even look at the alcohol to be tempted by it. I have enjoyed my health and life so much since I gave up drinking. If one wants to drink he or she cannot say God's Word is encouraging them to drink. If one studies all the passages on alcohol you see that God wants us to walk away from it for several reasons. The most holy life a person could lead in Scripture was that of a Nazirite, and they could not even drink grape juice, but we are not told we have to do this, but we are to be like Jesus and not even look at it when it is fermented. I have to say, "No thank you," often when I am at a wedding or at a place where they are drinking alcohol, but it has always been a good testimony when I kindly say, "No thanks."

These questions and answers cover most of the main issues concerning alcohol in the Bible, but here is another verse that some people claim condones the use of alcohol by Christians.

(Ephesians 5: 17-18) "Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation (intemperance); but be filled with the Spirit."

If we want to be wise and know what the will of God for our lives as Christians is, it is given to us here in these two verses. First, verse 18 is not condoning the moderate use of alcohol, as some

have claimed, but just the opposite. Being filled with wine or using any would be wrong, but being filled with the Holy Spirit is a command to be followed!

"The first command here could better be translated: 'Do not begin to be drunk with wine.' Since even a small amount of an intoxicant has a damaging effect on the brain, this command in effect calls for total abstinence from alcohol. Proverbs 23:31 warns against even looking on the wine, lest it tempt one to drink.

"The connotation of 'filled' here is 'being filled.' That is, the filling with the Spirit is not a once-for-all experience, like the baptism of the Spirit into the body of Christ [1 Corinthians 12:13]. Instead, we are urged to continually be filled with the Spirit-controlled by the Spirit. In a way analogous to how alcohol may control a person's thoughts and actions, the better way is to allow the Holy Spirit to have control." (The Defender's Study Bible, Dr. Henry M. Morris)

Now what should a Christian do for someone who has an addiction to alcohol?

This section has more quotes from *God is for the Alcoholic* by Jerry Dunn with Bernard Palmer.

"The term *alcoholism* was first used by Magnus Huss and may be defined as any change in the condition of the body or in its physical or mental activities caused by ethyl alcohol or alcoholic beverages. Alcoholism is literally a poisoning by spirits.

"It is the ethyl alcohol in beer, whiskey, and other liquors that causes intoxication. It is ethyl alcohol that causes addiction. The fact that there are those who drink because of personality defects cannot be denied. Yet basic research does not hold to the premise that the psychological makeup of a man is the primary cause of his alcohol addiction.

"Dr. Robert Fleming, one of the leaders in the World Health Organization, says, 'Most alcoholics are not psychiatric cases: they are normal people.' The conclusion reached in a fifty-six-page report issued by the World Health Organization is: 'First, nobody is immune to alcoholism. Second, total abstinence is the only solution. Alcohol is a poison to the nervous system. The double solubility of alcohol in water and fat enables it to invade the nerve cell. A person may become a chronic alcoholic without ever having shown symptoms of drunkenness.'

"Dr. Edwin H. Sunderland of Indiana University reached the same conclusion 'The alcoholic could be a sad type or a happy type, an introvert or an extrovert. In short, he could be anybody.'

"Alcoholism starts with the social drinking of alcoholic beverages, not with a problem personality. All alcoholic beverages-wine, beer, or whiskey-contain ethyl alcohol, a habit-forming drug. (*God Is For the Alcoholic* by Jerry Dunn with Bernard Palmer)

I have worked for years off and on with the Union Gospel Mission, which by the way is doing an excellent job for the Lord in their ministry. I have also worked in several other Christian organizations, and was a pastor of both an English speaking Community Church and a Spanish speaking Community Church. I can tell you from experience, that Christians struggle with this area of alcohol and drunkenness!

We need to realize this as a fact first and foremost, and then we need to see what we can do to help. Maybe God will call you to go to your local Union Gospel Mission and volunteer your help. It might mean getting with your pastor and asking him if there is a way you could help Christians in your church that are struggling with alcohol addiction. I know of one church in our area that allows AA to meet in their church building for free. You can pray that God will direct you as to what He wants you to do.

You will need to first understand very clearly what Scripture says about this subject of alcohol, and then how to work with those who are addicted or struggling with it. That is what this section is all about. Someone has said though, "It is better to build a fence at the top of a cliff with a warning, than it is to put an ambulance at the bottom of the cliff." There is more truth than poetry in that statement, as the saying goes. If we can prevent young people and Christians from every starting to drink it will be better than trying to help all those that will be addicted if not warned.

Two Types of Alcoholics

"Members of the Committee on Alcoholism of the American Medical Association's Council on Mental Health divided alcoholics into two groups. The first, *primary* alcoholics are those who drink because of addiction alone. *Secondary* alcoholics are those who begin to drink compulsively because of personal problems or for physical reasons and later become addicted. The primary alcoholic can be attracted to alcohol from the first drink and keep right on drinking until he is a slave to it.

"Roy E. Hatfield writes in *Christianity Today,* 'Today social drinking has become quite acceptable in many segments of the evangelical church. Forty eight percent of the Baptist community, for example, uses alcoholic beverages.' (*God Is For The Alcoholic*)

When I was a child it was rare for a Baptist to drink, in fact, many churches had in their constitution by-laws that you could not be a member of the church and even sell alcohol. Things have changed a lot through the years and not for the better, think of the untold domestic violence that has happened in 'Christian homes,' since this attitude that drinking "in moderation" is all right for the Christian.

As a side note, there was a lady, who in her desire to help people started a group that stressed drinking "in moderation;" last I heard about her she was pulled over for drunk driving. You see it is either good for us and of God, or else it is bad and not right for us. There is no middle ground, either a person is abstinent or they are on the road to becoming a person having problems with alcohol in the future. There are scientific reasons for this, no one thinks that they will be an alcoholic or have problems with alcohol when they start experimenting with alcohol, but ethyl alcohol is very addictive.

"Dr. Morris Fishbein wrote his own convictions on the same subject in the AMA Journal. 'Just a drink or two and the safe driver is turned into a reckless traffic menace.' There is good reason for this. Ethyl alcohol, when taken into the body, goes almost immediately into the bloodstream and up to the brain. It begins to affect the cortex of the brain, the location of higher brain centers that have to do with memory, conscience, and judgment. The anesthetic effect of alcohol slows man's

reactions measurable. It decreases his ability to judge distances and to tell the difference between visual and auditory stimuli.

"Until recently it was assumed that the deleterious or harmful effects of alcohol were largely due to nutritional deficiencies. Those who drank heavily were notoriously careless about their diet and neglected proper nutrition. During the past several years, however, it has become clear that alcohol itself is a toxin to many body organs and that proper and adequate nutrition does not protect the drinking individual from the effects of alcohol.

Effects on Society

"The *Alcoholism Report* published in December of 1983 made this startling comment in reviewing the Consumer's Federation of America's report: "Alcohol was third, behind automobiles and cigarettes in the top ten most hazardous of consumer products. Millions of Americans abuse or are addicted to alcohol. This abuse is a major cause of tens of thousands of deaths and millions of injuries that occur each year in accidents involving automobiles, boats and weapons. Moreover, heavy drinking is as important a cause of disease as cigarette smoking. Medical researchers have directly linked heavy consumption of alcohol to heart disease, hepatitis, cirrhosis of the liver, and to cancer of the mouth, esophagus, larynx, liver and other organs.

"Even small amounts of alcohol during pregnancy can be detrimental to the unborn baby. Women who have two standard drinks per day during pregnancy often give birth to smaller children. Significant increases in spontaneous miscarriages are noted in women who have as little as two drinks twice a week. Alcohol consumption during pregnancy can also cause physical and mental birth defects. [Do you see here another reason why Jesus would not have made an alcoholic drink for the wedding of Cana, being a large wedding there would have been probably several pregnant women?]

"The economic costs of alcohol abuse are also significant. Medical bills, time missed from work, property damage, and other associated costs totaled a hundred billion dollars in 1982. [I'm sure it is far greater now.] In the United States only heart and cardiovascular diseases exceeded alcohol abuse in total economic cost. In addition, alcohol is a major factor in crime. Eighty-six percent of homicides involve alcohol. Seventy-nine percent of assaults, seventy-two percent of robberies, fifty percent of rapes and fifty percent of automobile accidents."

Understanding the Alcoholic

"Before it is possible to help the alcoholic, it is necessary to understand him. We must remember that all alcoholism starts with social drinking.

"The first step is social drinking. Practically without exception, people take their first drink because someone offers them one. A few years ago young people began to feel the pressure to drink when they reached high school or college. Today it often begins in junior high, where increasing numbers think they have to have beer to enjoy a party. During the past school year, a

small Midwestern town was stunned when thirty-eight students attending a school sponsored junior high dance were caught drinking.

"Getting alcohol is no problem for most youngsters. They don't have to go to someone on a street corner to buy what they want. Many get their first drink from the refrigerator at home and most of their beer from their parents supply in the basement or garage.

"Mothers and fathers are often so concerned about marijuana, cocaine, and other drugs that they are almost relieved to learn that their children are only dabbling with alcohol. They may not realize that alcohol is also a drug, with the potential to destroy the lives of the unwary, and in a number of ways is more dangerous than the drugs every parent fears.

"We often fail to consider that the effect of alcohol on an individual has a direct relationship to his body weight. A can of beer will have far less effect on a 225-pound man than it will on a boy or girl of 90 pounds. Even a small amount of alcohol can have a devastating effect on a child.

"By the time many reach high school they are already on the road to problem drinking. 'I started hitting the bottle when I was fourteen,' a Canadian friend told me. 'Before the year was out I was a full-fledged alcoholic. I'd lie and steal to get another drink...'

"A high school teacher from another part of the United States told me, 'I have had kids come into my classes who were so drunk they scarcely knew where they were. We try to do something about it, but often they are problem drinkers, and we have no way of helping them except to urge their parents to get professional help for them.'

"In a small Nebraska town the inevitable round of graduation parties was held. A seventeen-year-old girl got drunk and went home with a girl friend. The next morning she was found in the bathtub, dead by drowning. Accidental deaths of graduating students in automobile accidents are common across the country and often take the lives of the innocent as well.

"There is mounting evidence that people who start drinking early are more likely to become alcohol dependent, Hingson and his team note in the July issue of the Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine. To investigate whether they may also become alcohol dependent at a younger age, the researchers analyzed the results of a 2001-2002 survey of 43,093 adults conducted by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. The researchers found that 47 percent of people who had started drinking before age 14 met criteria for alcohol dependence within 10 years." (*God is for the alcoholic*)

The following information can be found at druginfo.adf.org.au:

The facts about binge drinking - for young people

Introduction

Alcohol is the most widely used recreational drug in Australia. Because it is so widely used and socially acceptable in our society, alcohol is often not considered to be a 'drug', nor is it

considered to be particularly harmful. However, evidence from research shows that consumption of alcohol at harmful levels is increasing in Australia, particularly among young people. Furthermore, the prevalence of alcohol use among young people has increased in the past decade, the average age of first use being 14. Much of this drinking takes the form of 'binge drinking'.

What is binge drinking?

Binge drinking is a term widely used, but people tend to have quite different understandings of exactly what that means. Most definitions of binge drinking refer to the act of drinking heavily over a short period of time or drinking continuously over a number of days or weeks. Some common definitions of binge drinking/a binge drinker are:

- drinking to get drunk-a 'bender'
- occasional bouts of heavy drinking by young and/or non-dependent people
- intermittent, or irregular, episodes of excessive drinking
- 'a person who is normally restrained in their drinking habits but who at frequent intervals over-indulges to a marked degree'.

In this fact sheet, we use the term 'binge drinking' to refer to drinking, on any single occasion.

The consequences of these can have long-lasting effects on both your health and well-being (long-term harms).

Short-term effects

Binge drinking can result in acute intoxication (drunkenness). It can lead people to put themselves in dangerous situations and to take risks with their health and well-being. Common short-term effects of binge-drinking episodes are hangovers, headaches, nausea, shakiness and possible vomiting and memory loss.

The short-term risks of binge drinking include the risks of harm such as falls, assaults and car accidents. Young people often are not aware of the dangers associated with acute intoxication, and are more likely to indulge in risky behavior while intoxicated, such as swimming, driving, unwanted sex, verbal or physical abuse.

Long-term effects

If someone drinks heavily over a long period of time, they can become physically and psychologically dependent upon alcohol. Their body gets used to functioning with alcohol present and/or drinking can become more important than other activities in their life. Over time, alcohol can damage parts of the body, including the brain and liver. There are also the risks of developing emotional problems, such as depression, and problems at school, work and with relationships.

Other effects of binge drinking include unwanted pregnancy, feeling bad about yourself afterwards (such as shame or embarrassment), feeling vulnerable and out of control while intoxicated, losing friends or loved ones as a result of your behavior, loss of valuable items such as a car after a smash or personal items such as jeweler, or financial losses through reckless spending on alcohol or having to have time off work to recover from a binge.

How big a problem is it, really?

In 1998, alcohol use was the cause of 814 deaths and 25,207 hospital admissions of Australians aged 15-34. More than 40 per cent of people aged 16-24 surveyed in Victoria in September 2002 were drinking at levels that placed them at risk of short-term harm. Of these, 19.5 per cent of males and 13.8 per cent of females aged 18-24 were drinking at these risky levels on a weekly basis.

The prevalence of alcohol use, and binge drinking, among young people has increased in the past decade. "This generation of drinkers starts younger, drinks more and indulges in binge drinking to a greater extent than any previous generation." (DRUG INFO Clearinghouse)

Here are more quotes from *God is for the Alcoholic* by Jerry Dunn with Bernard Palmer:

"In colleges and universities, drinking becomes a way of life. Schools that try to control alcohol in the dorms have been forced to set up security guards in an attempt to keep it out. The pressure to drink socially is sometimes irresistible even to those initially determined not to participate in parties and drinking bouts. And in exceptional cases, even physical pressure has been used. At a state school in Nebraska, classmates of a polio victim in a wheelchair wrestled him to the floor and tried to force liquor down his throat. 'You have to drink when you go to a party,' a university sophomore said to me. 'Everybody does.' ['Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor, pressing *him/her* to your bottle, even to make *him/her* drunk, that you may look on their nakedness!' (Habakkuk 2:15)]

"The pattern for gracious living set by adults has filtered down to their children. An evening cannot be a success without the hospitality hour. At many parties the pressure to get everyone to drink is so great it seems imperative that everyone have a glass in his hand. For some reason drinkers feel uncomfortable if someone is present who isn't drinking.

"'I don't know why people will come to our neighborhood parties and be so smug they won't drink,' a woman complained in a newspaper advice column. 'It wouldn't hurt them to take just one cocktail...'

"The more education an American has the more likely he is to drink,' says Robert W. Jones, assistant director of the Center of Alcohol Studies at Rutgers University. 'More than half the people with only an elementary education drink. Approximately 70 percent of those with high school education drink, while the percentage is somewhat greater among college graduates.

"The liquor industry spends millions of dollars a year in advertising. Their purpose is to cloak their product with some semblance of respectability and to foster the notion that successful social

occasions call for alcohol. Their propaganda campaign has been very successful through the years. More and more evangelical Christians find themselves relaxing their opposition to social drinking and are adopting drinking habits that closely resemble those of American society in general. Consequently we are seeing increasing numbers of Christians falling into alcohol addiction.

"No one thinks he will become a slave to alcohol. The social drinker is determined not to drink so much that he staggers or makes a fool of himself or is a risk behind the steering wheel. He doesn't intend to make liquor the first love of his life-to the exclusion of his family, his friends, and his job. 'I've seen it happen to others,' he reasons, 'but it is not going to happen to me.' He is too smart-too much in control of himself-to let liquor master him. But, like 99 percent of all alcoholics, the chances are that he will not even recognize the danger signals until it is too late.

"Although social drinking is the first step to alcoholism, another even more insidious danger is the idea rapidly taking hold of more and more people that to demonstrate hospitality an alcoholic beverage must be served. Social drinking is the snare that traps many individuals who have fought their way back to sobriety.

"A man we'll call Pete was such a person. The path had been long and difficult for him, but at last he reached the place where he could stay sober He won back his wife and family, got a good job, bought a new home, and was once more getting ahead. It had been five years since he had a drink.

"Then his wife went to visit her mother. While he was at home alone the people in the block had a housewarming for a new couple who had moved into the neighborhood. Anxious to be hospitable, the newcomers brought up a case of beer from the basement.

"At first Pete hesitated. He knew he shouldn't drink that it was dangerous for him to do so. But how could he explain all of that to complete strangers? Rather than give them the sordid story of his drinking days he took a beer.

"He was determined to handle it, but the fires of alcoholism had not been put out. They had only been banked within him and were still smoldering. The taste of alcohol in that single glass of beer was enough to catch fire and send the flames racing out of control.

"Although five years had elapsed, he started to drink again. You know the rest of the story. He lost his job, his home, his family, and once more hit skid row-all because someone offered him a social drink and he was too embarrassed to turn it down.

"The story of Michele, told in the November 1981 issue of *Moody Monthly,* reveals that this can happen even to a fine Christian young woman. Michele, a member of an evangelical church, was promoted to the position of sales manager at the company where she worked. The opportunities to drink looked inviting, and she began to drink socially.

"At first she was sure it helped business. Her clients seemed more relaxed when she drank with them, and she thought it helped in making sales. It wasn't long, however until she was unable to

control her drinking. In a few months she came to church under the influence of alcohol. She had never intended it to go that far, but it did.

"The *dependent drinker* turns to beverage alcohol when things start to build up; when the problems he faces get to be too great for him. His boss chews him out on the job; he loses a big contract; his wife wants to spend more than he thinks they can afford on new furniture; or a bill collector gets nasty. So he drinks. It helps him to forget what has happened. The disappointments and frustrations don't seem so great under the temporary glow produced by alcohol.

I know quite a lot about that sort of drinking. I used to do my share of it.

"If something happened that disturbed me or made me angry I'd head for the nearest bar or package store. The bottle didn't solve a single problem, but that didn't keep me from running to it for solace. Nor did I face the fact that I always felt worse and less able to cope with life when the effect of the liquor wore off. Even though at that time my chief compulsion to drink came from the pressures I faced. I was becoming addicted to ethyl alcohol. And, like the habit drinker, I didn't realize it.

"There is actually little difference between the habit drinker and the dependent drinker. Both are in the early stages of alcohol addiction.

Ways others Can Help the Alcoholic

"Every problem people face has a spiritual solution. The ever-increasing problem of alcoholism is no exception. God has provided a way of escape. Those who are trying to help alcoholics must believe this. Otherwise, counseling an alcoholic or dealing with a family member ensnared in alcohol addiction can be a frustrating experience. The situation is so complex, so staggering, that there seems to be no solution apart from the conviction that God has provided a way of escape. ["No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it."* (1 Corinthians 10:13)]

"The road to rehabilitation may be long and difficult, but there is hope. First we must come to understand the alcoholic and the product that has enslaved him. Then we must inform ourselves about the ways in which he can be helped. Whether we are working in a rescue mission, or as a pastor or counselor, or whether we suffer the alcohol addiction of one of our loved one, there are definite ways we can help the alcoholic. We will consider these in detail in this section.

"A father had just stumbled home and was sprawled on the floor in a drunken stupor. His distraught wife knelt beside him, threw her body across his, and in anguish carried out in prayer. 'God, deliver him from the power of drink. Make him a decent husband and father again. I commend him to Thee in the name of Christ!'

"A widow with two small children, she had married this man after his first wife died, leaving him with three small children. For several years they were very happy-until drink began to get its claws into Clarence.

"In time they were separated, and the wife, following the advice of well-meaning friends and going against her own judgment, divorced him. He went off into the never-never land of the alcoholic in a helpless, hopeless, self-centered search for one bottle after another.

"It was twelve years before she saw Clarence again. This time he was sober and a respected member of the community. He was on the staff of the rescue mission where he had found Christ as his Savior. It was our privilege to remarry them.

"'I prayed for Clarence's salvation for twelve years,' she told me. 'I knew he was going to become a Christian. I kept asking God to save him.'

"Three years or more before they met again and were remarried she heard that he had become a believer. 'My prayers changed,' she continued. 'I thanked God for saving him and delivering him from the power of drink. I started praying that we might be reunited if that was God's plan for our lives.'

"The first way to help to help the alcoholic is to pray for him [her]. 'You can do more than pray after you've prayed,' S.D. Gordon says in his book *Quiet Talks on Prayer,* "But you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed."

"There is no area in which this statement is truer than in working with the alcoholic. There is much that can be done for him [her], but we cannot successfully do anything until we have committed our loved one into the hands of the Lord.

"'Our prayer,' Mr. Gordon explains, 'is God's opportunity to get into the world which shut Him out.'

"Put the alcoholic on your prayer list, and pray for him by name daily, believing that God is going to deliver him. The most powerful weapon we have is prayer. Because it is so powerful, we must know how to handle it. [See our Ephesians study part 6 for more on this area of prayer in a spiritual battle.]

"Prayer is so important in dealing with the alcoholic because the alcoholic cannot be helped unless he wants to be. Before anything can be done for him, he must reach the place where he asks for help himself. We can only help him decide that he wants help and will cooperate with the help he gets. The first step in accomplishing this is through prayer.

"There are a few simple ground rules we must understand and follow if our prayer lives are to be successful.

Be Sure You Are a Member of God's Family

"Prayer is a privilege and duty of the children of God. When the disciples asked the Lord Jesus to teach them to pray, He said, 'When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven' (Luke 11:2).

"If our prayers are going to be effective, we must first determine our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Have we experienced a personal deliverance from sin through faith in Christ? Have we been born into the family of God? If we have, we know that we have a right to pray to God as our heavenly Father. [For more on this go to our article *What does it Mean to be Born Again*.]

Where Do We Begin?

"When we first consider the problem of alcoholism and make an attempt to understand the alcoholic, we are apt to be overwhelmed. The problem is so bewildering and has so many ramifications we scarcely know where to begin. We feel as though we are in a maze and find it easy to forget that the most important thing we can do for the alcoholic is to present Christ to him [her].

"To be sure it isn't always possible to preach the gospel to every man on every occasion. You can't present Christ to him effectively if he is in a drunken stupor or needs medical attention. But we must always keep our attention focused on this one fact: the most important thing we can do for the alcohol addict is to speak to him [her] of Christ at the earliest possible moment. ["For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek." (Romans 1:16).]

"Garland Thompson, the founder and superintendent of the Open Door Mission in Omaha for a number of years, taught me this He had never been an alcoholic, nor had he made a special study of alcoholism. His entire life had been devoted to prayer and personal witnessing.

"I have seen Garland put an arm around a man who was too drunk to talk, telling him that God loves him and praying for him before he sent him on his way to sober up or perhaps to get medical attention. I had the privilege of talking to some of those same men after they were won to Christ.

"Know what set me to thinking?" they would tell me gratefully. "It was Garland Thompson putting his arm around me and telling me that God loves me and because He loves me, you guys here at the mission were going to help me. I was pretty drunk, but that got through." It was Christ who worked the victory in the lives of such men (and women), freeing them from alcoholism. In my own experience, it was the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that got hold of me after everything else had failed. If your alcoholic is to be delivered, you must present the gospel to him.

"That may not always be easy. A good friend of mine with an alcoholic brother found that to be true. 'I've had all of you I can take!' his brother snarled at him. 'Now leave me alone!'

"An attorney discouraged him when he mentioned trying to get help for his brother through the gospel. The attorney scornfully said, 'If the psychiatrists and trained people at the state hospital weren't able to help him, I'm sure your religious friend wouldn't be able to do anything for him.'

"As the "religious friend," I wasn't able to help personally, but I was able to point the young alcoholic to the One who could solve all his problems. He became a stalwart Christian.

"Working with alcoholics is not the most enjoyable part of a pastor's ministry. The alcoholic is often difficult, surly, and uncooperative. Usually he thinks that anyone who tries to help him is a personal enemy. He is secretive, untruthful, and suspicious, and is apt to be involved in immorality, the writing of bad checks, and gambling. His excessive and compulsive drinking has deeply hurt and affected the lives of-on the average-five innocent persons. He has become a blight on his family and his community.

"The average pastor has gone through some difficult experiences with alcoholics-experiences similar to those I have had.

Here I would like to share some of my own experiences. We were missionaries in Trinidad and Tobago in the West Indies, and we helped with church services in a little town called Lopinot. One night during the service there was a commotion in the snacket, the local bar next door to where the church was being held underneath a home. The houses in Trinidad are often built up on the second story with maybe a carport underneath or a place for animals. Anyway we were wondering what the noise was all about, and it turned out that the men had got into a fight and one had stabbed another in the side.

These men loaded the injured person up in a car and sped off for the hospital in the city. There was only one narrow lane road leading out of the village of Lopinot. So they sped away for help and they threw caution to the wind. As the raced along the road a woman and her child were walking along the narrow road unaware of the oncoming danger. As the car sped around the curvy road, in his haste, the driver didn't see the woman and the small child. As a result they hit the woman and dragged her under the car, as I remember it, and the infant was injured. Pastor K.K. and myself visited the man after he returned home from the hospital. His injuries had not been life threatening, so he was doing well, but the baby's mom had died. All this happened because some men wanted to have a "happy hour" at the local bar. "Wine *is* a mocker, strong drink *is* a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise." (Proverbs 20:1)

A friend of my dad, who lived in Moses Lake, Washington, had been drinking and had a head on collision with another car killing himself and everyone in the other car. The sad thing is that he knew Scripture, and I know my dad witnessed to him, but whether he was ever saved or not, I do not know. (See the tract *What Happened to Shorty?*) I could go on with many more personal experiences like this. Or I could tell about people who were saved and were still drinking, messing up their lives, and how they later got right with the Lord, and began serving Jesus Christ by reaching out to others.

"Stan Collie was such a man. He had degenerated to the point where, at forty years of age, he allowed his wife and six children to go hungry so he could have something to drink. On Saturday nights his wife and two of the older youngsters would go down to the business district of their little northern Saskatchewan community to pick him out of the gutter and pull him home in a coaster wagon.

"Then Christ got hold of him. His life was transformed. He began to witness to others and soon developed a great burden for the Indian people who lived in the Canadian north. Today he is know as the founder of the Northern Canada Evangelical Mission, an organization that has become a great force for God with almost two hundred missionaries all across Canada. We should look up each man [woman] as an opportunity.

Counseling Takes Time

"Often pastors are reluctant to work with the alcoholic because of the time it requires. We feel there is so much to do in seeing that the various church activities run smoothly and the needs of the rest of the congregation are met that we can't devote the time to one individual.

"You have to throw the clock away when you're dealing with the alcoholic," Charles Morey of the Chicago Christian Industrial League said. 'It is probably the most time-consuming type of counseling most of us will ever do.'

"Some pastors solve the problem by forming a team of concerned men within the church to work with the individual alcohol addict and help him out of alcoholism." (*God is for the Alcoholic* Jerry Dunn with Bernard Palmer)

You will have to read the book for yourself; it has some other great ways to reach alcoholics.

Now we would like to look at some summary comments by Dr. Bacchiocchi. I would suggest that this section is designed to help a Christian minister to see the arguments from Scripture as to the importance of not drinking alcohol. I believe that this section is important for everyone, but I need to explain that it goes into details of languages; everyone will not want to go into this much detail. I will give some examples of what you will find on his web site. For all the details though, please visit *Wine in the Bible: A Biblical Study of Alcoholic Beverages*

He will show, among other subjects that:

"… four related words *wine* in English, *vinum* in Latin, *oinos* in Greek and *yayin* in Hebrews. *In all four languages, these linguistically related words have been used historically to refer to the juice of the grape, whether fermented or unfermented.* This significant finding discredits the charge that the theory of the two wines is devoid of Biblical and historical support. The sampling of Biblical and historical sources examined in this chapter shows instead that it is the theory of one wine which is devoid of Biblical and historical support.

"Long before this century, scholars recognized that the Hebrew, Greek and Latin words for wine could refer equally to fermented or unfermented grape juice. In recent times, however, this historical understanding has been obscured by the restrictive use of "wine" which has come to mean only fermented, intoxicating grape juice. This has misled many Christians into believing that *yayin* and *oinos* also refer *only* to fermented wine which Scripture allegedly approves. (For an in-depth study on this area with references go to *The Meaning of "Wine" by Dr Bacchiocchi)*

"The study conducted in this chapter on the ancient methods of preserving both fermented wine and unfermented grape juice should help dispel two major misconceptions: (1) In the ancient world it was easy to preserve fermented wine because all that it takes is to let the pressed juice ferment naturally; (2) In the ancient world it was impossible to preserve the grape juice unfermented because people had neither the technical knowledge nor the means to prevent fermentation.

"We have found that both of these popular notions are unfounded. The problems the ancients encountered in preserving fermented wine were as great as, if not actually greater, than, those faced in preserving unfermented grape juice. To prevent wine from becoming acid, moldy, or bad-smelling a host of preservatives were used such as salt, sea-water, liquid or solid pitch, boiled-down must, marble dust, lime, sulphur fumes or crushed iris.

"In comparison to preserving fermented wine, the keeping of grape juice from fermenting was a relatively simple process. It was accomplished simply by boiling the juice down to a syrup, or by separating the fermentable pulp from the juice of the grape by means of filtration, or by placing the grape juice in sealed jars which were immersed in a pool of cold water, or by fumigating with sulphur the wine jars before sealing them. The use of such techniques clearly indicates that the means of preserving grape juice without fermentation were known and used in the ancient world.

"The fact that the documentation comes mostly from the classical world rather than from the Old Testament world does not mean that the art of preserving grape juice was unknown in ancient Israel. The Jews were not less knowledgeable in the art of preserving fruits, cereals and juices than were the surrounding nations. We found that, according to Josephus, the Romans were astonished to find in the fortress of Masada, wine, oil, fruits and cereals freshly preserved, though they had been stored for several years. Furthermore, rabbinical sources mention specifically the use of boiled wine.

"The reason for the silence of Scripture on the *means* used for preserving grape juice is to be found in the nature of the Bible itself, a book which deals primarily with those aspects of life which are related to salvation history. In the Bible we find no treatise on agriculture, as among classical writers. The reason is not a lack of interest or of knowledge of farming, but a reluctance to deal with issues unrelated to the religious life of God's people.

"No mention is made in the Bible of the means used to prevent the spoilage of fermented wine, yet the Jews must have known them. The same holds true for unfermented grape juice. The Bible attests that God's people did have and did use unfermented grape juice. We are not told how the Jews preserved the grape juice unfermented. We have reasons to believe that they knew some methods of preservation known and used in the ancient world. (For the whole article and references go to: *The Preservation of Grape Juice* by Dr. Bacchiocchi

"We have examined at considerable length the major wine-related stories or sayings of Jesus that are commonly used to prove that our Savior *made*, *commended, used* and *commanded* the use of alcoholic wine until the end of time. We have found these claims to rest on unfounded assumptions, devoid of textual, contextual and historical support.

"The 'good wine' Jesus *made* at Canaan was 'good' not because of its high alcoholic content but because it was fresh, unfermented grape-juice. The "new wine" Jesus *commended* through the parable of the new wineskins is unfermented must, either boiled or filtered, because not even new wineskins could withstand the pressure of the gas produced by fermenting new wine. Jesus' description of Himself as 'eating and drinking' does *not* imply that He *used* alcoholic wine but that He associated with people freely at their meals and elsewhere. The 'fruit of the vine' that Christ *commanded* to be used as a memorial of His redeeming blood was not fermented wine, which in the Scripture represents human depravity, corruption and divine indignation, but unfermented and pure grape juice, a fitting emblem of Christ's untainted bloodshed for the remission of our sins.

"The claim that Christ used and sanctioned the use of alcoholic beverages has been found to be unsubstantiated. The evidence we have submitted shows that Jesus abstained from all intoxicating substances and gave no sanction to His followers to use them. (For more on this subject with references go to: *Jesus and Wine* by Dr. Bacchiocchi)

"**New Wine in Fresh Wineskins.** A possible use of *oinos* in the New Testament as a reference to unfermented wine, is found in Matthew 9:17 where Jesus says: "Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; if it is, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved." From this verse we learn that it was customary in Christ's time to put new wine into new wineskins in order to preserve both the wine and its wineskins.

"The usual explanation for this custom is that new wineskins were used because they could better resist the expansive force of the carbonic acid generated by fermentation. For example, Jimmy L. Albright writes: "Freshly made wine was put into new wineskins; old skins would burst under the pressure (Matt 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37-38)." This view can hardly be correct, because new wineskins, no matter how strong, could resist the pressure caused by fermentation. I have learned this fact from personal experience, as I have seen in my parents' cellar glass bottles shattered to pieces by grape juice which had inadvertently fermented.

"The *Encyclopedia Biblica* rightly observes that "it is impossible that the *must* could ever have been put into skins to undergo the whole process of fermentation, as is usually stated, the action of the gas given off in the earlier stages of the process being much too violent for any skins to withstand."

"The process of wine making in the ancient Near East is only relatively known. James B. Pritchard, excavator of ancient Gibeon, where storage vats were found, candidly admits that "only a little is known from literary and pictorial sources of preclassical times about the process of making wine in the ancient Near East." According to his reconstruction, at Gibeon the juice of pressed grapes was transferred into four different tanks during the course of several days. In the last three tanks the violent fermentation processes occurred. Then the decanted wine was poured into large jars sealed with olive oil at 65 degrees F (18 degrees C).

"**Unfermented Grape Juice** In the light of this information, Christ's saying about "new wine" being placed in "fresh wineskins" can best be understood as referring to wine fresh from the

press which was strained and possibly boiled, and then placed immediately into new wineskins made air-tight, possibly by a film of oil on the opening of the wineskin. The various methods used by the ancients to preserve grape juice unfermented will be discussed in Chapter 4. At this juncture it suffices to note that Christ's words suggest that "new wine" was placed into fresh wineskins to insure the absence of any fermentation-causing substance.

"'If old bags were used,' Lees and Burns explain, 'some of the decayed albuminous matter adhering to their sides must, by the action of air, have become changed into a leaven or ferment (Hebrew, *seor*); or by long wear and heat, cracks or apertures admitting the air might exist undetected; and the wine, thus set a-fermenting, would in due course burst the skin, and be spilled and 'lost"44 On the other hand, if unfermented new wine was poured into new wineskins, no cause of fermentation would be present. Thus, the wine would be preserved from fermentation and the wineskins from rupture. If this interpretation is correct, then Christ's reference to 'new wine' (*oinos neos*) would constitute another example of the use of *oinos* in the New Testament to describe unfermented grape juice.

"**Oil and Wine Spared** An example of the generic use of the word *oinos* is found in Revelation 6:6, where a voice is heard from the center of the throne room, saying: "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; but do not harm oil and wine [*oinos*]!" The warning against hurting the oil and the wine sets the limits to the destruction which the black horse and its rider are about to carry out. 'Since the roots of the olive and vine go deeper,' explains Robert H. Mounce, 'they would not be affected by a limited drought which would all but destroy the grain.'

"In the context of this warning against the destruction of the harvest, the reference to "oil and wine" is significant, because it shows that these two terms could be used to refer to the solid fruits, the olive and the grape yielding oil and wine (*oin*os) . This usage of the term *oinos* to refer to the actual fruit-the grapes-is not surprising, because there are numerous examples in secular Greek in which wine is spoken of as produced within the grape and cluster. Anacreon, for example, speaks of the *oinos* 'imprisoned in the fruit upon the branches," and he sings of the treaders "letting loose the wine.'

"The above examples of the usage of *oinos* in the New Testament and in the Septuagint show that the term was used in Biblical Greek in a generic way, to refer to either fermented or unfermented grape juice. This usage is consistent with what we have found to be the use of *yayin* in the Old Testament. Thus the meaning of the two related Biblical terms for wine (*yayin* and *oinos*) must be determined by the context in which they are used.

"The chapter is divided into [three] parts, the first [two] of which deal with wine-texts and the last one with the admonitions to sobriety and to temperance. Thus, the outline of the chapter is as follows:

1. Acts 2:13: 'Filled with New Wine'

2. 1 Corinthians 11:21: 'One is Hungry and Another is Drunk'

3. Admonitions to Sobriety

"PART I: ACTS 2:13: 'FILLED WITH NEW WINE'

"**Importance of the Text:** The apostles had scarcely begun their Messianic proclamation when they were accused of drunkenness. On the day of Pentecost the first company of believers received the gift of tongues enabling them to preach the Gospel in the languages of the people gathered for the feast at Jerusalem. While thousands believed in Christ as a result of the miracle, others began mocking the disciples, saying: 'They are filled with new wine' (Acts 2:13).

"Summing up we can say that Acts 2:13 provides an indirect but telling proof that the apostles abstained from alcoholic beverages. As Ernest Gordon says, 'There would be no point in referring to unfermented wine as a source of intoxication and the strange actions following, if it were not generally understood that the apostles used no intoxicating wine.' [For all the reasons why this passage is not an indication that early Christians were drinkers look at this site by Dr. Bacchiocchi.]

"PART II: 1 CORINTHIANS 11:21: 'ONE IS HUNGRY AND ANOTHER IS DRUNK'

"**Importance of the Text** Moderationists see in Paul's reference to 'drunkenness' at the communion table in the Corinthian church an unmistakable proof that alcoholic wine was used in the Apostolic Church both privately at home and publicly at the Lord's Supper. Paul's statement reads as follows: 'When you meet together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal, and one is hungry and another is drunk' (1 Corinthians 11:20-21).

"The reasoning of moderationists is that the problem of drunkenness at Corinth can only be explained by their use of alcoholic wine. As someone put it, "How could the Corinthians get drunk on Communion wine if it were not fermented?" Furthermore, it is argued that "it is significant to note that even in the light of their drunkenness, Paul does *not* issue a 'cease and desist' order in this matter." The argument is clear. Paul condemned the abuses at Corinth but not the use of alcoholic wine. We shall examine this claim by considering three points: (1) The Nature of the Feast; (2) The Meaning of the Verb *Methuo*; (3) The Implications of Paul's Admonition. [For a complete account of the arguments on this passage go to this site, but here is the conclusion.]

"In the light of the above considerations we conclude that Paul's reference in the King James Version to "drunkenness" at the Communion table of the Corinthian church, offers no support for a moderate use of alcoholic wine either privately at home or publicly at the Lord's Supper. First, because whatever was done at Corinth was a departure from the instructions Paul had "delivered" to the church and thus their actions are more of a *warning* than an example for us. Second, because the problem at the Communion table, as we have shown, appear not to have been intoxication with alcoholic wine but indulgence in eating.

"**Paul's Admonition:** In the epistles of Paul and Peter, several admonitions to sober-mindedness explicitly relate to physical abstinence on which the existence and exercise of sobriety rest. This

is indicated especially by the close connection in which they stand with such terms as *me paroinos, enkrate* and *nephalios*, all of which, as we shall see, refer primarily to abstinence from intoxicating wine.

"In 1 Timothy 3:2-3 Paul states: 'Now a bishop must be above reproach, the husband of one wife,*temperate, sensible*, dignified, hospitable, an apt teacher, no drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and no lover of money.' The two terms 'temperate, sensible' are here used to translate the Greek*nephalion* and*sophrona*. The first, as we shall show below, means 'abstinent' and the second 'of sound mind,' or 'sober-minded.' 'The order of terms,' as Lees and Burns point out, "is instructive. The Christian overseer is to be*nephalion*, 'abstinent'-strictly sober in body, in order that he may be sober in mind.' The two words occur in the same order in Titus 2:2, though the word 'serious' is placed between them. In 1 Timothy 3:2-3 the two words stand in close connection with *me paroinon*, a term which literally means 'not near wine.' On the significance of the latter, more will be said below.

"In Titus 1:6-8, where Paul repeats to a large extent what he said in 1 Timothy 3 about the qualifications for the office of bishop/elder, the order is somewhat different: ' ... hospitable, a lover of goodness, master of himself [*sophrona*], upright, holy, and self-controlled [*enkrate*]' (v. 8). Here *sophrona* ('sober-minded'), translated 'master of himself' by the RSV, precedes *enkrate*, a term which as we shall see below, is also employed in the sense of abstinence.

"**Peter's Admonition:** A clearer connection between sober-mindedness and physical abstinence is found in 1 Peter 4:7: 'The end of all things is at hand; therefore keep sane [*sophronesate*] and sober [*nepsate*] for your prayers.' The verb *nepsate* is the (aorist) imperative form of *nepho*, which some etymologists derive from the prefix *ne* 'not' and *pino* 'to drink,' thus literally, not to drink, while others from *ne* 'not' and *poinos* (for *oinos* 'wine'), thus literally, 'without wine.'

"The basic meaning of the verb *nepho*, as most Greek authorities cited below recognize, is 'to be sober, in contradistinction to being drunk.' Thus, what Peter is actually saying in 1 Peter 4:7 is 'keep mentally sober and physically abstinent for your prayers.' It is not difficult to see the connection among mental sobriety, physical abstinence and prayer life. Persons who use intoxicating beverages weaken their mental alertness, and consequently either ignore their prayer life or pray for the wrong things.

"In conclusion, some of the apostolic admonitions to mental sobriety, expressed through the *sophron* word group, are clearly connected to physical abstinence, which determines the existence and exercise of mental sobriety.

"**Correlation with Luke 12:41-46.** Peter's exhortations to vigilance and abstinence appear to have been inspired by the parable of the *drunken* servant which *Christ spoke directly to Peter* 'Then Peter said to Him, 'Lord, do You speak this parable *only* to us, or to all *people?'"*(Luke 12:41).

"And the Lord said, 'Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom *his* master will make ruler over his household, to give *them their* portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant

whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has.

"'But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the menservants and maid-servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk.' In that parable the faithful steward is commended for watching over his master's household while the unfaithful one is condemned for beginning 'to eat and drink and get drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him,* and at an hour when he is not aware; and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the unbelievers.' (Luke 12:42-46).

"Allusions to this parable appear several times in 1 Peter. For example, 1 Peter 4:10 says, 'as good stewards of God's varied grace.' This is strikingly similar to Luke 12:42, 'the faithful and wise steward whom his master will set over his household.' Similarly 1 Peter 4:5, '…him who is ready to judge the living and the dead,' appears to be an echo of Luke 12:46, 'The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him...and will punish him.' Also 1 Peter 5:3, 'Not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock' harks back to the unfaithful servant of Luke 12:45 who began 'to beat the menservants and the maidservants.'

"The allusions in 1 Peter to Luke's parable of the unfaithful servant, who is caught *drunk* and punished by his returning master, strongly support the translation of *nepho* in its primary sense of abstaining from wine. Furthermore, the allusions help us understand why 1 Peter 1:13 would urge abstinence in radical terms: "*nephontes teleios*" ("be completely abstinent").

"Summing up our study of the five usages of *nepho*, two by Paul (1 Thessalonians 5:6, 8) and three by Peter (1 Peter 1:13; 4:7; 5:8), we can say that all show an amazing consistency in urging both mental vigilance and physical abstinence. Moreover, we have found that the primary meaning of *nepho* as abstinence from intoxicating beverages is supported in 1 Thessalonians by the contrasting parallel between the sons of the day who are sober and the sons of the night who are drunk.

"In 1 Peter, support for the abstinence meaning of *nepho* comes both from the allusions to the parable of the drunken servant of Luke 12 and from the context of 1 Peter 4:7, where the apostle refers to the past life-style of 'drunkenness' (1 Peter 4:3). It is also significant that all five admonitions to abstinence are given in the context of preparation for the imminent return of Christ. To this point we shall return after examining the usage of the adjective *nephalion*.

"**Summarizing what has been said in references on alcohol in the Bible:**

"The conclusion emerging from the investigation conducted in this chapter into the apostolic teachings regarding alcoholic beverages is abundantly clear. Contrary to the prevailing perception, the New Testament is amazingly consistent in its teaching of abstinence from the use of alcoholic beverages.

"We have found that the texts commonly used to support the moderationist view provide no support to such a view. On the contrary, some of them openly contradict the moderationist view.

"The irony of the charge in Acts 2:13 that the apostles were drunk on *gleukos*, that is, grape juice, their common beverage, provide an indirect but important proof of their abstinent life-style and inferentially of the life-style of their Master.

"Paul's reference to 'drunkenness' at the Communion table of the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 11:21) offers no support for a moderate use of alcoholic wine, because whatever was done at Corinth was a departure from the instructions Paul had delivered to the church. Thus, their conduct constitutes a warning rather than an example for us. Furthermore, our study of the meaning of the verb *methuo* ('satiated') and of the implications of Paul's admonitions suggests quite clearly that the problem at Corinth was indulgence in eating rather than intoxication with alcoholic wine.

"The intent of Paul's admonition in Ephesians 5:18 ('Do not get drunk with wine') is not to sanction the moderate use of wine, but to show the irreconcilable contrast between the spirit of wine and presence of the Holy Spirit. The structure of the passage, as well as the possible connection between 'wine' and the relative clause-recognized by many ancient and modern translations-makes this text one of the most powerful Biblical indictments against intoxicating wine.

"The apostolic admonitions to sobriety and temperance call for a moderate use of all good things and total abstinence from all that is harmful. Our study of the Greek terms (*sophron, nepho, nephalios,* and *enkrateia*) used in the apostolic admonitions has shown how these terms complement one another in emphasizing the Christian need for both mental vigilance and physical abstinence from intoxicating substances such as alcoholic beverages. The fundamental reason given by Peter and Paul for their call to a life of vigilance and abstinence is eschatological, namely, preparation to live in the holy presence of Christ at His soon coming.

"Wine separates man from the way of life and leads him in the pathway of death, because wine leads to idolatry… Thus we learn that wherever [Scripture] speaks of wine, there you find also dissoluteness … For this Isaiah said: 'The strength of the law is in salvation, but the strength of wine is in sorrow. Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine' (Is 5:22). For this we read: 'Who has a woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? … Those who tarry long over wine' (Proverbs 23:29-30). When wine enters the body, out goes sense; where ever there is wine there is no understanding.

"Similar rabbinic warnings against wine are found in the compilation of Talmudic statements on wine by Rabbi Isidore Koplowitz. Here are some: 'Whenever wine enters a person, his mind becomes confused.' 'Rabbi Isaac said, 'The evil spirit entices a person only while he is eating and drinking, and when one becomes merry by wine, then the evil spirit has the mastery over him. . . . The drinking of wine causes the evil inclinations to be awakened within a person, as it is written, 'And they made their father [Lot] drink wine that night etc.' (Gen. 19:33).

"**Permanent Prohibition.** Another statement attributed to Rabbi Eliezer makes the prohibition against drinking wine a permanent law for all times: 'Therefore, the Holy One, blessed be He, commanded Aaron, 'Do not drink wine nor strong drink.' Do not assume that this injunction against wine and strong drink was only for the past, namely as long as the holy Temple at

Jerusalem was still in existence, as it is written, 'When ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation,' but you have to guard against wine for all times to come, for wine is an omen of curse.' An extreme example of how evil intoxicating beverages were in the mind of some Jews is the rabbinic statement that 'Samuel did not pray in a house that contained intoxicating drinks (Talmud Babli Erubin 65a).'

"**Conclusion.** The foregoing analysis of Ephesians 5:18 has shown that this text provides*no Biblical sanction for moderate use of alcoholic beverages.* On the contrary, the structure of the passage as well as the possible connection between 'wine' and the relative clause, a connection recognized by numerous ancient and modern translations, makes this text *a most powerful Biblical indictment of intoxicating wine.*

"The intent of Paul in this passage is to show the irreconcilable contrast that exists between the spirit of fermented wine and the Holy Spirit. In the life of a believer the two are mutually exclusive. Summing up, the thought of Ephesians 5:18-19 can be paraphrased as follows: 'Do not get drunk with wine, because the use of wine places a person in a state of *asotia*, that is, of moral corruption inimical to the reception of saving truth. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Find enjoyment not in the stimulation of wine but in the inspiration of the Spirit who causes you to sing and make music in your heart to the Lord.'"

(All of these quotes are from Dr. Bacchiocchi, for the complete information given, and references, see his site: *Wine in the Apostolic Church*.)

For more information: bible-christian.org

Beer and Other Alcoholic Beverages in the Bible

by Gary T. Panell

You may be surprised to find that the word beer is used in the Bible. In the New International Version of the Bible the Hebrew word "shakar" is translated as "beer." In the King James versions of the Bible the Hebrew word "shakar" is translated as "strong or intoxicating drink." They made these drinks from dates or other fruits (grapes excepted) or barley millet, etc.

Drinking alcohol today has become common place, and many Christians see nothing wrong with it. They use the Bible to condone their actions-saying, "Didn't Paul tell Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake?" They question, "Didn't Jesus drink wine?" Then they insist that Jesus made alcoholic wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee.

These sound like convincing arguments until you understand that the main Hebrew word for "wine" (yayin) or the main Greek word (oinos) can refer to a fermented or unfermented drink. The wine spoken of in the Bible is a generic term. The context in each case indicates whether it was speaking of fermented wine or not.

You might ask, "Could people in Bible times keep their juices from fermenting when there was no refrigeration?" The answer is, "Yes." To preserve their sweet juices in a hot climate, people often boiled the juice down until it was thick like syrup, and later when they were ready to use it they would add water to it. Also they would boil their juices and, then seal the air out. There were other methods to prevent fermentation like filtration or by drawing off the juice from the subsided yeast, and by the use of sulfur. They could, at times keep juice in a cool place such as in a cave, underground or in running water. For more on this subject read, Bible Wines, by William Patton or Wine In The Bible: A Biblical Study On The Use Of Alcoholic Beverages, by Samuele Bacchiocchi).

So to assume that every time the Bible uses the word "wine"-it is speaking about a fermented drink is not looking at the facts! Isaiah 65:8 says, "Thus says the LORD: As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one says, 'Do not destroy it for a blessing is in it..." Here the grape juice in the cluster is called 'wine' (tirosh). In Isaiah 16:10b says, "...no treaders will tread out wine in their presses." As soon as the juice was pressed out of the grapes it was called wine. But in Genesis 9:21 it is clear that fermented wine is what Noah drank to get drunk on. (It is well to note, however, how it got him and his son Ham into trouble drinking it!) This should be enough to prove that the word 'wine' is a generic term in our Bibles! (See Bible Wines by William Patton)

Now the argument, Paul told Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake. Yes, Paul told Timothy, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your often infirmities." (1Timothy 5:23) This text clearly implies that Timothy did not drink any wine before this time. The recommendation by Paul was strictly medicinal, so to quote the advice of

Paul to Timothy to justify drinking is to distort the intent of the passage! Again because the word "wine" is used many people jump to the conclusion it is fermented, when in fact Paul and the rest of Scripture have already warned against the use of fermented wine.

Then you ask, "Was unfermented wine ever used as a medicine?" Yes, Athenaeus states, "Let him take sweet wine, either mixed with water or warmed, especially that kind called protropos (juice coming from the grapes before they are pressed), as being good for the stomach."(Athenaeus, Banquet 2:24).

The question, "Didn't Jesus drink fermented wine?" comes from what the false religious leaders said about Jesus in Matthew 11:18, 19. "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' "The Son of Man came eating and drinking (Jesus was not fasting like John, and did drink unfermented wine), and they say, "Look, a gluttonous man and a winebibber (wine drinker), a friend of tax collectors and sinners! NKJV

John was a Nazarite and was not to drink grape juice or fermented wine Luke 1:15. Jesus on the other hand had a different type of ministry. Jesus did talk with drinkers who were considered sinners and this made the religious leaders angry. These were the same men who said Jesus was a glutton and had a demon. These leaders were jealous and upset because Jesus was becoming so popular. They were lying about Jesus being a glutton, about Jesus having a demon, and they were also lying when they said Jesus was a winebibber (or alcoholic drinker)!

The Bible says Jesus always did the will of the Father who is in heaven. So He would not disobey God the Father who said by the Holy Spirit, "Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper." Proverbs 23:31 and 32 (NKJV)

Now, "Did Jesus make alcohol for the wedding in Cana?" The term used in, John 2:1-11, is "oinos" the generic Greek word for both fermented and unfermented juice. We must determine from the context whether it is a fermented or unfermented drink here.

The person in charge of the wedding party remarked, after he had tasted the wine, "...you have kept the good wine until now." Good wine was fresh grape juice, the fermented grape juice was considered inferior. Also Jesus would know about Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (being God as well as man), and would not give alcohol to a wedding party, which probably included several pregnant women. No, Jesus did NOT make a fermented wine at this wedding. What He did do was to give a wedding gift of at least 120 gallons of fresh grape juice.

The Hebrew word (chemah) is translated as "poison" when speaking of fermented wine in Deuteronomy 32:33. Alcohol is a toxic mind-altering drug. Alcohol causes ill effects on the digestive, muscular, skeletal, nervous and circulatory systems. It causes cirrhosis of the liver, jaundice, pancreatitis, and blackouts as well as many other sicknesses.

About sixty percent of all traffic accidents and seventy percent of all murders are alcohol related. Then there is the untold domestic violence it has caused. Proverbs 20:1, warns, "Wine is a mocker, intoxicating drink (beer) arouses fighting, whoever is led astray by it is not wise!"

God's Word is consistent; it does not tell us not to drink fermented wine in one part of the Bible and in another part only to drink a little alcohol. Here are three types of New Testament references that people think are saying it is all right to drink a little fermented wine, beer, etc. First, Ephesians 5:18, in some versions the word "excess" is used. The New King James Version more accurately uses the word "dissipation" (meaning intemperance or the opposite of temperance-which is total abstinence from alcoholic liquors).

Second, in other references such as 1 Timothy 3:2,3 and Titus 1:7, we have the phrase, "not given to wine" this is taken by some to mean, "not to be addicted" to alcohol. But in reality the Greek word used here is, "mee-paroinon," literally, not at, by near, or with wine (alcohol). According to Paul, total abstinence is an indispensable qualification for a pastor. (See Bible Wines William Patton)

The third type of reference that has caused confusion to some, are the ones like 1Timothy 3:8 and Titus 2:3."not given to much wine." In order to understand these verses we will need to understand a popular vice of that time. That was to drink a lot of unfermented wine. They used various methods to promote thirst. These drinkers might continue drinking all night at their feasts. Excessive drinking, even of non-alcoholic drinks corresponded to gluttony-the excessive use of food. Paul is simply guarding the deacons against a vice of the day. It would be similar in our day to "bulimia" (eating or drinking to the point of being gorged and then vomiting). This is unbecoming behavior for a Christian in any age!

The New International Version in 1 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7 say here, "not given to drunkenness." This translation does not make sense in light of Proverbs 23:31 and 32 and the rest of the injunctions against any drinking of alcohol. Paul even goes so far as to warn that a person would not be saved if they are drunkards. "...nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 6:10) So be very careful which versions of the Bible you study!

In Revelation 1:6, we are called kings and priests, according to Scripture kings or princes were not to drink fermented wine or intoxicating drink. In Proverbs 31:4, 5 we are also told that priests were not to drink any wine or intoxicating drink when they went into the tabernacle (or temple), Leviticus 10:9 and 10. Then 1 Corinthians 3:16 says, "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"

For more study on this subject read also: 1 Samuel 1:13-16, Proverbs 4:14-17, 23:29-35, Isaiah 5:22, 28:7, 8 Jeremiah 35:1-6, 18, 19; Daniel 1:8-16, Amos 2:12 Habakkuk 2:5, 15-16; Mathew 24:46-51; 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8; 1 Peter 1:13.

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MYTHS about WINE and ALCOHOL in the BIBLE

Part 1

Compiled by Gary T. Panell

We will be looking at many myths that surround the study of wine and alcohol in the Bible. These myths are being circulated in many Christian churches today. I believe, after looking at this detailed two-part study, many Christians, who are interested in the truth of God's Word, will come away with a correct understanding of what God says about alcohol.

We will be looking at the myth that says the word 'wine' in the English language has always meant only a fermented drink. We will look at the myth that says the Hebrew and Greek words in the Bible for 'wine' always mean a fermented drink.

We will show that it is just a myth to think that people in Bible times did not know how to preserve grape juice without it fermenting, and that it is a myth that grape juice left to stand, automatically always turns into alcoholic wine on its own. We will also show that people in Bible times did not have to turn their grape juice into alcohol in order to preserve it for long periods of time. And that it is a myth that people could preserve the grape juice easier by fermenting it.

We will show that it is a myth that Jesus made an alcoholic drink for the wedding in Cana. We will disprove the myth that alcohol was used in worship as a drink offering for the Lord in the Tabernacle and the Temple. We will see it for what it is, and that is another myth, which says the Old Testament believers could drink alcoholic wine and have God's approval for this.

We will resolve once and for all that it is a myth that St. Paul encouraged drinking of alcohol when he told Timothy to take some wine for his stomach's sake. Then too, we will prove it is a myth that deacons, deaconesses and elders of the church were told by St. Paul it was alright to drink alcohol just as long as they were not drinking to excess.

We will uncover the reasons why people thought the disciples of Christ were drunk on the day of Pentecost. We show that it is a myth that Jesus served fermented wine to His twelve Apostles at the Last Supper. We will show that it is a myth that Christians were drunk at the Communion table in Corinth. We will try to answer every question commonly asked about alcohol in the Bible.

We will show that the letters of St. Paul do not say that we can drink alcohol as long as we don't get drunk or don't get drunk too often (as some new versions of the Bible translate), but that we are to abstain from all alcohol in any form. We will prove that the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ taught their followers to be sober as they wait for His return. We will show that God has always hated alcohol and its use, not just its abuse!

First, let us look at the myth that says the word 'wine' in the English language has always meant only a fermented drink. This first section was taken from the research done by Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi:

Most people assume today that the word “wine” can refer only to fermented, intoxicating grape juice, or to the fermented juice of any fruit used as a beverage. The basis for this assumption is the current definition given to the word by most modern dictionaries.

For example, the seventh edition of the *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* defines "wine" as follows: "1: fermented grape juice containing varying percentages of alcohol together with ethers and esters that give it bouquet and flavor. 2: the usu. fermented juice of a plant product (as a fruit) used as a beverage. 3: something that invigorates or intoxicates."

Note that no mention at all is made in this current definition of unfermented grape juice as one of the possible meanings of "wine." It is not surprising then that people who read a definition such as this, common to most dictionaries, would naturally assume that ‘wine' can only mean a fermented juice.

Past Usage of "Wine" This restrictive meaning of "wine" represents, however, a departure from the more classical dual meaning of the word as a designation for both fermented or unfermented grape juice. To verify this fact one needs only to consult some older dictionaries.

For example, the 1955 *Funk & Wagnall's New "Standard" Dictionary of the English Language* defines "wine" as follows: "1. The fermented juice of the grape: in loose language the juice of the grape whether fermented or not."

This definition shows that [not that many] years ago the loose usage of "wine" referred to "the juice of the grape whether fermented or *not*." It is noteworthy that even the more recent *New Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language* (1971) defines "must" as "Wine or juice pressed from the grapes but not fermented." This definition clearly equates "wine" with grape juice.

The 1896 *Webster's International Dictionary of the English Language* which defines "wine" as "the expressed juice of grapes, especially when fermented . . . a beverage . . . prepared from grapes by squeezing out their juice, and (usually) allowing it to ferment." This definition is historically accurate, since it recognizes that the basic meaning of "wine" is "the expressed juice of grapes," which is usually, but not always, allowed to ferment.

"The problem," as Robert Teachout points out, "is that people have taken the very *usual* meaning of the word (whether in Hebrew, Greek, Latin or English)—as an intoxicating beverage—and have made it the *only* definition of the word. That is incorrect scholarship! It is inaccurate both biblically and secularly, and it is inaccurate in the English language historically."

Older English Dictionaries The inaccuracy in the English language becomes even more evident when we look at older English dictionaries. For example, the 1828 *Webster's Dictionar*y defines the word "must" as *"new wine*—wine pressed *from* the grape, but not fermented." Note that the unfermented grape juice is here explicitly called "new wine."

The 1759 Nathan Bailey's *New Universal English Dictionary of Words and of Arts and Sciences* offers the following definition for "wine": "Natural wine is such as it comes from the grape, without any mixture or sophistication. Adulterated wine is that wherein some drug is added to give it strength, fineness, flavor, briskness, or some other qualification." Note that in this definition Bailey does not use the word "fermented," though it is implied in some of the wines he describes…

Bible Translations The above sampling of definitions of "wine" from older English dictionaries suggests that when the King James Version of the Bible was produced (1604-1611) its translators must have understood "wine" to refer to both fermented and unfermented wine.

In view of this fact, the King James Version's uniform translation of the Hebrew *yayin* and Greek *oinos* as "wine" was an acceptable translation at that time, since in those days the term could mean either fermented or unfermented wine, just as the words it translates (*yayin* or *oinos*) can mean either…" (You can find all of this information, with foot notes and references on Dr. Bacchiocchi's web site *WINE IN THE BIBLE*)

I hope this historical lesson has cleared up some questions that you may have had about the word 'wine' in the English language. It is a shame that, today, most of the dictionaries define the word 'wine' as alcohol, considering its historical roots as a 'generic' term.

Maybe we as Christians need to start using the word more correctly and call grape juice, wine. Well, now that I think about it, some of us do that already with the Communion juice. We never serve alcohol in our Communion, but we do call it wine when referring to it sometimes.

Now, we want to shift gears for a little bit and look at the most often used 'reason' given by people who claim the Bible teaches us it is ok to drink alcohol. That's right; they say Jesus made alcohol for a wedding. Then we will look at some other 'reasons' why people say the Bible teaches that it is ok to drink some alcohol. Here are some questions we have received on our web site, Bible-Christian.org and the answers that were given.

Christ's first miracle was the turning of water into wine at the marriage feast. I was always taught that the wine was unfermented. The wine that Lot's daughters drank was fermented, etc.

I guess the bottom line is that I was taught that when it was used in a good way in the Bible it was unfermented, when used in a bad way it was fermented. I believe that Scripture does not contradict itself and that if Jesus turned the water into wine, it must be unfermented, as Jesus knew the Scripture and He would not do anything against it. Can you help? Thanks.

Thank you for the question and it is a good one. You are on the right track, though, and it seems like you just want some proof for what you believe. I believe there is proof, proof that is beyond a shadow of a doubt! Here is the Scriptural account from the New Kings James Version of the Bible.

"On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him. 'They have no wine.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, do it.'

'Now there were set there six water pots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the water pots with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them. 'Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.' And they took it.

'When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew) the master of the feast called the bridegroom. And he said to him, 'Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then that which is inferior; but you have kept the good wine until now.' This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him." (John 2:

1-12)

(The following is paraphrased from an article by Dr. Bacchiocchi, Jesus and Wine. If you want the article with the footnotes and references, please go to his internet site *WINE IN THE BIBLE.*)

The popular belief that "Jesus was not a teetotaler," but a moderate drinker of fermented wine who even "miraculously manufactured a high-quality (alcoholic) wine at Cana"…has no doubt influenced the drinking habits of millions of Christians around the world more than anything else that the Bible says about drinking.

The reason is simple. The example and teachings of Christ are normative for Christian belief and practice. If Christ made, commended and used fermented wine, then there can hardly be anything intrinsically wrong with a moderate drinking of alcoholic beverages! Simply stated, "If wine was good enough for Jesus, it is good enough for me!"

The belief that the wine Christ provided in Cana was alcoholic rests on five major assumptions. First, it is assumed that the word oinos "wine" indicates only "fermented-quality grape drink, i.e. wine." Second, it is assumed that since the word oinos "wine" is used in reference, both to the wine which ran out and the wine that Christ made, both wines must have been alcoholic.

Third, it is assumed that the Jews did not know how to prevent the fermentation of grape juice; and since, as argued by William Hendriksen, the season of the wedding was just before Spring Passover (cf. John 2:13), that is, six months after the grape harvest, the wine used at Cana had ample time to ferment. Fourth, it is assumed that the description given by the master of the banquet to the wine provided by Christ as "the good wine" means a high-quality alcoholic wine.

Fifth, it is assumed that the expression "well drunk" (John 2:10) used by the master of the banquet indicates that the guests were intoxicated because they had been drinking fermented wine. Consequently, the wine Jesus made must also have been fermented. In view of the importance that these assumptions play in determining the nature of the wine provided by Christ, we shall examine each of them briefly in the order given...

...The Meaning of Oinos... (The first and the second assumption are really based on this mistaken view that oinos, Greek for wine, always is fermented.)* A better acquaintance with the use of the word 'wine,' not only in the Greek language, but also in old English, Latin and Hebrew, would have saved scholars from falling into the mistaken conclusion that oinos means only fermented wine.

The truth of the matter is…oinos [Greek] is a generic term, including all kinds of wine, unfermented and fermented, like yayin in Hebrew and vinum in Latin. Thus, the fact that the wine made by Christ at Cana is called oinos, offers no ground for concluding that it was fermented wine. Its nature must be determined by internal evidence and moral likelihood. The record of the evangelist, as we shall see, affords information for determining this question.

(The first and second assumptions are discredited by two facts.)* First, as mentioned earlier, the word oinos is a generic term referring either to fermented or to unfermented wine. Second, the wine provided by Christ is differentiated from the other by being characterized as ton kalon, 'the good' wine. This suggests that the two wines were not identical. The nature of the difference between the two wines will be discussed below.

Preservation of Grape Juice : The third assumption, that it would have been impossible to supply unfermented grape juice for a spring time wedding about six months after vintage, rests on the assumption that the technology for preserving grape juice unfermented was unknown at the time.

The latter assumption is clearly discredited by numerous testimonies from the Roman world of New Testament times describing various methods for preserving grape juice. [This will be discussed in great detail later in this article.]

…Preservation of grape juice was in some ways a simpler process than the preservation of fermented wine. Thus, the possibility existed at the wedding of Cana to supply unfermented grape juice near the Passover season, since such a beverage could be kept unfermented throughout the year. [We will give much proof of that fact also latter in this article.]

"High-Quality Alcoholic Wine :" The fourth assumption is that the wine Jesus provided was pronounced 'the good wine' (John 2:10) by the master of the banquet, because it was high in alcoholic content. Such an assumption is based on [modern] tastes.

Albert Barnes, a well-know New Testament scholar and commentator, warns in his comment on John 2:10 not to "be deceived by the phrase 'good wine.' The reason, he explains, is that "We use the phrase to denote that it is good in proportion to its strength, and its power to intoxicate. But no such sense is to be attached to the word here."

…To the Roman world of the New Testament times, the best wines were those whose alcoholic potency had been removed by boiling or filtration. Pliny, for example, says that "wines are most beneficial (utilissimum) when all their potency has been removed by the strainer." Similarly, Plutarch points out that wine is "much more pleasant to drink" when it "neither inflames the brain nor infests the mind or passions" because its strength has been removed through frequent filtering…

The wine Christ made was of high quality, not because of its alcohol content, but because, as Henry M. Morris explains, "It was new wine, freshly created! It was not old, decayed wine, as it would have to be if it were intoxicating. There was no time for the fermentation process to break down the structure of its energy-giving sugars into disintegrative alcohols."

It thus was a fitting representation of His glory, and was appropriate to serve as the very first of His great miracles (John 2:11). Rabbinical Witness : The rabbinical witness on the nature of wine is not unanimous. Rabbi Isidore Koplowitz points out in his introduction to his collection of rabbinical statements on wine and strong drink that "it is true that some Talmudic doctors have sanctioned, aye, even recommended the moderate use of wine.

"But it is equally true that many Talmudic Rabbins have in vigorous words condemned the drinking of wine and strong drinks. Some Rabbis have even ascribed the downfall of Israel to wine. An example of disapproval is the statement, often repeated with minor variations by different rabbis, which says: "When wine enters into the system of a person, out goes sense, wherever there is wine there is no understanding."

…Elsewhere the Talmud indicates that drinking was forbidden to the accompaniment of musical instruments in festive occasions such as weddings (Sotah 48a; also Mishna Sotah 9, 11). …In the light of these testimonies and considerations we would conclude that the wine provided by Christ was described as "the good wine" because it was not intoxicating.

Moral implications : Another reason leading us to reject the assumption that "the good wine" produced by Christ was high in alcoholic content is the negative reflection such an assumption casts upon the wisdom of the Son of God.

…The oinos in this case was grape juice. In the light of the whole Old Testament condemnation of wine [that was fermented], it certainly would appear that the beverage was grape juice."

It is against the principle of Scriptural and moral analogy to suppose that Christ, the Creator of good things (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25,: Col 1:16), would exert His supernatural energy to bring into existence an intoxicating wine which Scripture condemns as "a mocker" and "a brawler" (Proverbs 20:1) and which the Holy Spirit has chosen as the symbol of divine wrath.

Scriptural and moral consistency require that "the good wine" produced by Christ was fresh, unfermented grape juice. The very adjective used to describe the wine supports this conclusion. "It must be observed," notes Leon C. Field, "that the adjective used to describe the wine made by Christ is not agathos, good, simply, but kalos, that which is morally excellent or befitting. The term is suggestive of Theophrastus characterization of unintoxicating wine as moral (ethikos) wine.

Referring to the nature of the wine produced by Christ, Ellen White says: "The wine which Christ provided for the feast, and that which He gave to the disciples as a symbol of His own blood, was the pure juice of the grape. To this the prophet Isaiah refers when he speaks of the new wine 'in the cluster,' and says, 'Destroy it not: for a blessing is in it'

"…The unfermented wine which He provided for the wedding guests was a wholesome and refreshing drink. Its effect was to bring the taste into harmony with a healthful appetite."

"Well Drunk." The final assumption to be examined relates to the expression "well drunk" (John 2:10) used by the banquet master. The full statement reads: "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now" (John 2:10, KJV).

The assumption is that since the Greek word methusthosin "well drunk" indicates drunkenness and since drunkenness is caused, according to the statement of the banquet master, by the "good wine" customarily served first, then "the good wine" provided by Christ must also have been intoxicating, because it is compared with the good wine usually served at the beginning of a feast.

…This reasoning misinterprets and misapplies the comment of the master of the banquet, and overlooks the broader usage of the verb. The comment in question was not made in reference to that particular party, but to the general practice among those who hold feasts:

"Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine…" (John 2:10, RSV). This remark, as many commentators recognize, forms parts of the stock in trade of a hired banquet master, rather than an actual description of the state of intoxication at a particular party.

Another important consideration is the fact that the Greek verb methusko can mean "to drink freely" without any implication of intoxication.

…The verb methusko in John 2:10 is used in the sense of satiation. It refers simply to the large quantity of wine generally consumed at a feast, without any reference to intoxicating effects.

Those who wish to insist that the wine used at the feast was alcoholic and that Jesus also provided alcoholic wine, though of a better quality, are driven to the conclusion that Jesus provided a large additional quantity of intoxicating wine so that the wedding party could continue its reckless indulgence. Such a conclusion destroys the moral integrity of Christ's character.

The Object of the Miracle : The stated object of the miracle was for Christ to manifest His glory so that His disciples might believe in Him. This objective was accomplished: "This, the first of His signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him" (John 2:11).

Christ's presence at a marriage feast was intended to show divine approval of the marriage institution and of the innocent enjoyments of social life. Yet all of these considerations were subservient to the manifestation of Christ's glory in fulfillment of His Messianic mission.

The glory of God is revealed especially in His act of creation (Psalm 19:1-2). Likewise, Christ's "eternal power and deity" (Romans 1:20) through an act of creation: "He…made the water wine [grape juice]" (John 4:46).

The wine of the miracle must have been identical to the wine found in the grape-clusters, because this is the only wine that God produces. "There is not a hint," writes R. A. Torrey, "that the wine He [Christ] made was intoxicating.

"It was fresh-made wine. New-made wine is never intoxicating. It is not intoxicating until some time after the process of fermentation has set in. Fermentation is a process of decay. There is not a hint that our Lord produced alcohol, which is a product of decay and death. He produced a living wine uncontaminated by fermentation."

"I am satisfied," states William Pettingill, "that there was little resemblance in it [wine made by Christ] to the thing described in the Scripture of God as biting like a serpent and stinging like an adder (Proverbs 23:29-32).

"Doubtless rather it was like the heavenly fruit of the vine that He will drink new with His own in His Father's kingdom (Matthew 26:29). No wonder the governor of the wedding feast at Cana pronounced it the best wine kept until the last. Never before had he tasted such wine [grape juice], and never did he taste it again."

Christ's miracles were always directed to benevolent ends. He "came not to destroy men's lives but to save them" (Luke 9:56). If it were true that Christ miraculously manufactured an intoxicating wine, then that miracle would be a notable exception among His miracles. It would be a malevolent manifestation of His power. He would have manifested shame rather than glory.

Christ was aware of the powerful influence His example would have on contemporary and future generations. If, with all this knowledge He created an intoxicating wine, He would have revealed diabolic rather than divine power and glory. His disciples could hardly have believed in Him, if they had seen Him do a miracle to encourage drunkenness.

[I agree 100 percent with these statements and would like to add to them that: The Bible says Jesus always did the will of the Father who is in heaven. So He would not disobey God the Father, who said by the Holy Spirit:

"Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper." (Proverbs 23:31-32 NKJV) Also, He would not make people sin by making an alcoholic drink, which we are told not even to look at, let alone drink.

Also, Jesus being God as well as man would know about the harmful affects of alcohol, such as Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, and would not give alcohol to a wedding party, which probably included several pregnant women. No, Jesus did NOT make a fermented wine at this wedding. What He did do, was to create and give a wedding gift of at least 120+ gallons of fresh grape juice, thus proving He is the loving Messiah-God, as the theme of St. John points out!]* Comments by Gary T. Panell

GENERIC WORDS

This section is taken from the research done by William Patton from his book Bible Wines or Laws of Fermentation and Wines of the Ancients.

Professor M. Stuart, in his *Letter to Rev. Dr. Nott* , February 1, 1848, says, page 11: “There are in the Scriptures (Hebrew) but two *generic words* to designate such drinks as may be of an intoxicating nature when fermented and which are not so before fermentation.

"In the Hebrew Scriptures the word *yayin* , in its broadest meaning, designates *grape-juice, or the liquid which the fruit of the vine yields* . This may be new or old, sweet or sour, fermented or unfermented, intoxicating or unintoxicating.

"The simple idea of *grape-juice* or *vine-liquor* is the basis and essence of the word, in whatever connection it may stand. The specific sense which we must often assign to the word arises not from the word itself, but from the connection in which it stands."

He justifies this statement by various examples which illustrate the comprehensive character of the word.

In the London edition (1863) of President E. Nott's *Lectures* , with an introduction by Tayler Lewis, LL.D., Professor of Greek in Union College, and several appendices by F. R. Lees, he says: "Yayin is a generic term, and, when not restricted in its meaning by some word or circumstance, comprehends vinous beverage of every sort, however produced. It is, however, as we have seen, *often* restricted to the fruit of the vine in its natural and unintoxicating state” (p. 68).

Kitto's Cyclopedia, article Wine: "Yayin in Bible use is a very general term, including every species of wine made from grapes (oinos ampelinos), though in later ages it became extended in its application to wine made from other substances."

Rev. Dr. Murphy, Professor of Hebrew at Belfast, Ireland, says: "Yayin denotes all stages of the juice of the grape."

"Yayin (sometimes written yin, yain, or ain) stands for the expressed juice of the grape—the context sometimes indicating whether the juice had undergone or not the process of fermentation. Its mentioned one hundred and fort-one times."— *Bible Commentary* , Appendix B, p. 412.

[I would like to slip in here a question we often get on a Deuteronomy passage that can be cleared up by an informed understanding of what is being said here. Here is one of many questions we have received on our interactive Bible Discussion web site:

Please explain Deuteronomy 14:26 to me. I have been doing an internet search regarding alcoholic beverage consumption and what the Bible has to say. This one verse has really perplexed me because this is the only time I have seen a possible endorsement of intoxicating liquors in the Bible.

Thanks for asking the question about alcohol and the Bible. The Bible is very clear on this subject; I will give you the "short" answer. The word "wine" in our English Bible does not always mean a fermented drink. The main Hebrew word for "wine" (since the Old Testament was written in Hebrew) is "yayin" (what is pressed out).

The verse you are asking about (Deuteronomy 14:26) is very straight forward. It uses this Hebrew word "yayin" which means "grape juice". Remember that this word is almost always translated as "wine" whether the grape juice is fermented or not. When we think "wine," we always think "fermented," but this is not the case.

The word "wine" in the Bible is a generic term. The context (words before and after the word wine) indicates whether it was fermented or not. For some examples of this look at Isaiah 65:8. Grape juice is called "wine" when it is still in the grapes on the vine, where it is impossible to be fermented.

So to assume that every time the Bible uses the word "wine" it is talking about a "fermented drink" is not looking at the facts! Another example of this is found in Isaiah 16:10b where it says "...no treaders will tread out wine in their presses..." As soon as the juice was taken out it was called "wine."

Now I would like to finish answering your question on this specific reference, Deuteronomy 14:26. God wanted these believers to tithe on everything, including their fresh grape juice (look at verses 23b and 26). Here God is saying if it is too far to travel from your house to the place of worship with these things, you could sell them right away and take the money instead.

Then when you get there, you can buy the same type of things, fresh grape juice, etc. Then you can rejoice before the Lord. That doesn't mean to get drunk, but to enjoy the food and grape juice you have bought for your family. The New King James Version of the Bible is the best to read when discussing this area of alcohol, it is the most accurate on this subject.

I guess I didn't isolate the part that bothered me. It is the other drink mentioned. The New King James says "wine or similar drink". The Old King James says "wine or strong drink". The Complete Jewish Bible says "wine, other intoxicating liquor". One source I read says the noun in Hebrew means an intoxicating drink.

Where did the New King James get "similar?" I was raised in a Baptist church and never ever heard a word about this verse. Do you disagree with the meaning of the Hebrew word for the other drink mentioned with wine?

Yes, I do stand by the New King James Version translation "wine or other similar drink". I do this for two reasons: first, having been raised in a Baptist church (I myself was an M.K. & P.K.) you will know that one does not make a doctrine out of one verse. The rest of Scripture is very clear on this subject. I hope you had a chance to look at my articles and the other web sites listed there.

Second, the NKJV used the 1967/1977 Stuttgart edition of the Biblia Hebraica, based on the Ben Asher text, while frequent comparisons were made with the Bomberg edition of 1524-25. The Septuagint (Greek) Version of the Old Testament and the Latin Vulgate also were consulted.

In addition to referring to a variety of ancient versions of the Hebrew Scriptures, the New King James Version draws on the resources of relevant manuscripts from the Dead Sea Caves. You can read more of these quotes from the front of a good NKJV. —Comments by G.T. Panell]

GREEK, LATIN, AND ENGLISH GENERIC WORDS .

OINOS .—Biblical scholars are agreed that in the Septuagint or Greek translation of the Old Testament and in the New Testament, the word *oinos* corresponds to the Hebrew word *yayin* . Stuart says: "In the New Testament we have oinos, which corresponds exactly to the Hebrew yayin."

As both yayin and oinos are generic words, they designate the juice of the grape in all its stages.

In the Latin we have the word vinum, which the lexicon gives as equivalent to oinos of the Greek, and is rendered by the English word wine, both being generic. Here there are four generic words, *yayin, oinos, vinum*, and *wine*, all expressing the same generic idea, as including all sorts and kinds of the juice of the grape. Wine is generic, just as are the words groceries, hardware, merchandise, fruit, grain, and other words.

Dr. Frederic R. Lees, of England, the author of several learned articles in *Kitto's Cyclopedia,* in which he shows an intimate acquaintance with the ancient languages, says: "In Hebrew, Chaldee, Greek, Syriac, Arabic, Latin, and English, the words for wine in all these languages are *originally* , and always, and *inclusively* , applied to the blood of the grape in its primitive and natural condition, as well, subsequently, as to that juice both boiled and fermented."

Dr. Laurie, on the contrary, says: "This word denotes intoxicating wine in some places of Scripture; therefore, it denotes the same in all places of Scripture." This not only begs the whole question, but is strange, very strange logic.

[This is the kind of logic that many, even Evangelical scholars today, use when discussing this area of wine in the Bible. Look what this "Evangelical" Dictionary says: "The only alcoholic beverage identified by name in the Bible is wine (in the **OT** *yayin* and *tiros;* in the **LXX** and **NT** *oinos).*

"Another Hebrew word, *skar,* is translated "strong drink" in the KJV and "beer" in the NIV. No evidence whatsoever exists to support the notion that the wine mentioned in the Bible was unfermented grape juice.

"When juice is referred to, it is not called wine (Gen.40:11). Nor can "new wine" (*tiros or gleukos*) mean unfermented juice, because the process of chemical change begins almost immediately after pressing.

"The new wine mentioned in Acts 2:13 must have been fermented, because nearly eight months had passed since the last grape harvest. The term correctly signifies the wine made from the first drippings, which had a higher sugar content before fermentation and therefore was stronger. In the Bible wine is wine, not grape juice." (Evangelical Dictionary of Theology second edition Edited by Walter A. Elwell)

Let me just say, this is the standard belief of many Bible 'Scholars' today, even Evangelical 'scholars.' This is too bad, when a person cannot even admit that there is such a thing as grape juice in the Bible.

Believe it or not people today are much like people in those days. Most people do like juices and are not going to give their children alcohol. Well, this is the subject of the rest of the article, so I better let you get into the discussion and decide for yourself. This insert was done by G. T. Panell]

We find the word which denotes the spirit often rendered wind or breath; shall we, therefore, conclude it always means wind or breath, and, with the Sadducees, infer that there is neither angel nor spirit, and that there can be no resurrection?

So, also, because the word translated heaven often means the atmosphere, shall we conclude that it always means atmosphere, and that there is no such place as a heaven where the redeemed will be gathered and where is the throne of God?

But the misery and delusion are that most readers of the Bible, knowing of no other than the present wines of commerce, which are intoxicating, leap to the conclusion, wine is wine [is an intoxicant] all the world over—as the wine of our day is inebriating, therefore the wine mentioned in the Bible was intoxicating, and there was none other.

There is a perverse tendency in the human mind to limit a generic word to a particular species. John Stuart Mill, in his *System of Logic* , says: "A generic term is always liable to become limited to a single species if people have occasion to think and speak of that species [more often] than of anything else contained in the genus. The tide of custom first drifts the word on the shore of a particular meaning, then retires and leaves it there."

The truth of this is seen every day in the way in which the readers of the Bible limit the generic word wine to one of the species under it, and that, an intoxicating wine." (*Bible Wines* William Patton)

This section is by Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, Ph. D., Andrews University

A major objection to the view that Scripture approves the use of unfermented grape juice is the alleged impossibility in Bible times of preserving grape juice unfermented. Burton Scott states this objection most clearly in his article on "*Wine*" in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* : "Unfermented grape juice is a very difficult thing to keep without the aid of modern antiseptic precautions, and its preservation in the warm and not overly-cleanly conditions of ancient Palestine was impossible."

Objective of This Chapter aims at ascertaining whether the preservation of grape juice in its unfermented state was possible or impossible in Bible times. Our investigation will show that the ancients were far more knowledgeable in the art of preserving fruits and wines than generally presumed.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first considers the methods used by the ancients to preserve fruits and wines in general and the second, the methods used to prevent the fermentation of grape juice in particular.

PART I: THE ANCIENT ART OF PRESERVATION

1. The Preservation of Fruits

Amazing Ability. There is considerable information regarding the amazing ability of the ancients to preserve fruits and juices. An example is Josephus' account of the Roman capture of the fortress of Masada. He tells us that the fruits and grains the Romans found in the fortress were still fresh, although they had been stored for many years:

"Here was laid up corn in large quantities, and such as would subsist men for a long time; here was also wine and oil in abundance, with all kinds of pulse and dates heaped up together; all which Eleazar found there, when he and his *Sicarii* got possession of the fortress by treachery.

These fruits were also fresh and full ripe, and not inferior to such fruits newly laid in, although they were little short of a hundred years from the laying in (of) these provisions (by Herod), till the place was taken by the Romans; nay, indeed, when the Romans got possession of those fruits that were left, they found them not corrupted all that while: nor should we be mistaken, if we supposed that the air was here the cause of their enduring so long."

Josephus' claim that the Jews in Masada were able to preserve grain and fruits fresh for almost one hundred years is obviously an exaggeration. The statement, however, does suggest that the art of preserving produce was well known to the Jews. Unfortunately Jewish sources do not tell us what such technology was.

Classical Writers Some classical writers, however, do offer us considerable insight into the methods used by ancient people to preserve grains, fruits, vegetables and wines. One of them is Columella, a renowned agriculturalist who lived in the first century A.D. In his treatise *On Agriculture and Trees* , Columella discusses at great length the various methods used by different people to preserve such produce as lettuce, onions, apples, pears, berries, plums, figs, olives, unfermented grape juice and fermented wine…

The Preservation of Grapes Several methods were used for preserving grapes fresh. One of them consisted in cutting the grapes with lengthy branches and sealing the cut with pitch. The grapes were then placed in vessels filled with dry chaff. "In order that the grapes may remain green for as much as a year," Columella explains, "you will keep them in the following manner.

"When you have cut from the vine grapes . . . , immediately treat their pedicles with hard pitch; then fill a new earthenware pan with the driest possible chaff, which has been sifted that it may be free from dust, and put the grapes upon it. Then cover it with another pan and daub it around with clay mixed with chaff, and then, after arranging the pans in a very dry loft, cover them with dry chaff."

"Other people, according to Columella, preserved grapes by dipping their pedicles into boiling pitch immediately after they were cut, and then placing them in dishes arranged in different layers within a barrel containing boiled-down must. Instead of must, some people used barley-bran to "fill the barrel with alternate strata of bran and grapes. Next they put on the lids and seal them up and store the grapes in a very dry and cool loft.…

"Pliny, a Roman scholar and naturalist, contemporary of Columella, briefly describes in his *Natural History* other methods used to preserve grapes: "Some grapes will last all through the winter if the clusters are hung by a string from the ceiling, and others will keep merely in their own natural vigor by being stood in earthenware jars with casks put over them, and packed round with fermenting grape-skins."

Squeezed Grapes. The fact that the ancients knew several methods for preserving grapes fresh until the following vintage suggests that unfermented grape juice could be produced at any time of the year simply by squeezing grapes into a cup. This practice is confirmed both in rabbinical and Christian literature.

For example, the *Halakat Gedalat,* the earliest compendium of the Talmud, says: "One may press out a cluster of grapes and pronounce the *kiddush* [blessing pronounced at the consecration of the Sabbath or a festival] over the juice, since the juice of the grape is considered wine in connection with the law of the Nazarite."

The apocryphal *Acts and Martyrdom of Matthew*, a document which circulated in the second and third centuries of the Christian era, attests to the use of freshly pressed juice of grapes in the celebration of the Lord's Supper:

"Bring as an offering the holy bread; and, having pressed three clusters from the vine into a cup, communicate with me, as the Lord Jesus showed us how to offer up when he rose from the dead on the third day." This is a clear and positive testimony not only of the custom of making grape juice by pressing grapes, but also of using unfermented grape juice in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

There are indications that the practice of pressing preserved grapes directly into the Lord's Supper cup continued for centuries. For example, the third Council of Braga (A.D. 675) reports Cyprian's charge against those "who presented no other wine [*vinum*] at the sacrament of the Lord's cup but what they pressed out of the clusters of grapes."

It is noteworthy that fresh grape juice is called "wine" *(vinum*). The charge was not against the use of unfermented grape juice as such, but rather against the failure to mix the grape juice with water.

The practice of mingling wine with water apparently originated, as Leon C. Field points out, "not necessarily in the weakening of alcoholic wine, but in the thinning of boiled wines and the thick juices of the crushed clusters."

Instruction about this had already been given three centuries before by Pope Julius I (A.D. 337) in a decree which read: "But if necessary let the cluster be pressed into the cup and water mingled with it."

Additional historical testimonies will be given in the following chapter, in conjunction with our study of the communion wine. Such testimonies show that freshly preserved grapes were used throughout the year to make pressed grape juice.

2. The Preservation of Fermented Wine

A Prevailing Misconception It is widely believed that in the ancient world it was much easier to preserve fermented wine than to preserve unfermented grape juice. Such a belief rests on the mistaken assumption that the preservation of fermented wine was a simple process requiring only that the pressed grape juice ferment naturally.

The truth is quite different. Fermented wines are subject to a number of infections which cause them to become acid, malodorous and moldy. The ancients were well aware of these problems.

Pliny, for example, frankly acknowledges that "it is a peculiarity of wine among liquids to go moldy or else to turn into vinegar; and whole volumes of instructions how to remedy this have been published." [It is interesting but while I was writing this article, someone called me and said that a bottle of Champaign (that had never been opened) had been saved for many years from a wedding. When the bottle was finally opened, it was found that it had turned into vinegar.—G. T. Panell]

Columella similarly notes that both fermented wine and unfermented, boiled-down must were subject to spoil: "Boiled-down must, though carefully made, is, like wine, apt to go sour." He goes on saying: "This being so, let us be mindful to preserve our wine with boiled-down must of a year old, the soundness of which has been already tested."

Here Columella indicates that unfermented, boiled-down grape juice, which generally kept better than fermented wine, was used to preserve the latter. Before discussing some of the techniques used in the ancient world to preserve wine, it is important to note how delicate and difficult it was in those days to preserve wine. A major reason was the lack of a precise technology for controlling the fermentation process.

The Discovery of Pasteurization It was in the late nineteenth century that Louis Pasteur, the great French chemist, discovered the cause of fermentation and a remedy for it, known as pasteurization. Pasteur's famous research, *Études sur la bière* (1876), was in fact conducted at the request of beer and wine producers who asked him to find a way to prevent the infections which spoiled their products, causing them enormous financial loss.

This research led Pasteur to discover that fermentation was caused by the multiplication of microorganisms rather than by chemical change. To prevent or control fermentation, Pasteur discovered in 1876 a method known today as "pasteurization," which consists in the destruction of certain bacteria by exposing a liquid (wine, milk, beer) for a period of time to a certain temperature.

Today through pressure boilers, filters, separators, complex refrigeration and pasteurization, the wine industry (known as enology) is able to control the fermentation process. Such a control becomes especially necessary when the must contains too much water and too little sugar because the season has been cold or rainy, or because the grape has grown on moist lands.

In such case, wine makers today correct the imperfect composition of the must by adding to it saccharin substances and by diminishing its water content through artificial evaporation. These modern technical procedures have freed wine growers from the constant fear that their vintage may become spoiled. Without such a technical knowledge and means, ancient wine makers faced the constant risk of losing their vintage.

Problems in Preserving Wine Marcus Porcius Cato (234-150 B.C.), who is considered the father of both Latin prose and literature on agriculture, refers to some of the problems related to the preservation of fermented wine. In chapter 148 of his treatise *On Agriculture* **,** Cato alludes to such problems when he speaks of the terms "for the sale of wine in jars." One of the conditions was that "only wine which is neither sour nor musty will be sold…

Cato prescribes some precautions to prevent wine from becoming sour or musty: "Divide the grapes gathered each day, after cleaning and drying, equally between the jars. If necessary, add to the new wine a fortieth part of must boiled-down from untrod grapes, or a pound and a half of salt to the culleus [a liquid measure].

If you use marble dust, add one pound to the culleus; mix this with must in a vessel and then pour into the jar. If you use resin, pulverize it thoroughly, three pounds to the culleus of must, place it in a basket, and suspend it in the jar of must; shake the basket often so that the resin may dissolve. When you use boiled must or marble dust or resin, stir frequently for twenty days and press down daily."

In this statement Cato provides quite an insight into the variety of products used to preserve fermented wine: boiled-down must, salt, marble dust, and resin. Later we shall see that Columella mentions other preservatives as well. In spite of the use of such preservatives, problems still developed with fermented wine…

Apparently this treatment did not always prevent wine from turning sour (*asperum*). To sweeten the wine turned bitter, Cato offers this prescription: "Make four pounds of flour from vetch, and mix four cyathi of wine with boiled-down must; make into small bricks and let them soak for a night and a day; then dissolve with wine in the jar, and seal sixty days later." This procedure was to make the wine "sweet" and "of good odor…"

The above examples of ancient remedies to cure problems caused by fermenting wine show how mistaken the assumption is that the preservation of fermented wine was a simple process in the ancient world. The sources indicate that the process was far from simple…

The examples cited suffice to show that the preservation of fermented wine in the ancient world was a far more complex process than is generally assumed. In fact, in some places the risk of preserving fermented wine was so great that, as we shall now see, all the vintage was boiled-down and preserved as sweet, unfermented grape juice. (*WINE IN THE BIBLE: A BIBLICAL STUDY ON*

THE USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, Chapter 4 by Samuele Bacchiocchi — The footnotes have been left out for ease in reading, but these are given on Dr. Bacchiocchi's web site.)

[If a person is not familiar with how grape juice is fermented they might think it just happens automatically without much help from man. This, of course, is not the case! Here is an example of how alcohol is made from grape juice: The essential steps in winemaking can be summarized as follows:

• Extract the flavor and aroma from the base ingredients by chopping, crushing, pressing, boiling or soaking them.

• Add sugar, acid, nutrients, and yeast to the fermentation media or liquor to achieve the proper ratio and ferment, covered, for 3 to 10 days in a primary fermentation vessel (crock, jar or polyethylene pail) at 70-75 degrees Fahrenheit.

• Strain off the liquid from the pulp, put it 9the liquid) into a secondary fermentation vessel (a carboy or jug), fit a fermentation trap (airlock) on the mouth of the bottle, and allow fermentation to proceed at 60-65 degrees Fahrenheit until all bubbling ceases (after several weeks).

• Siphon the wine off the sediments (lees) into another clean secondary fermentation vessel. Reattach the fermentation trap. Repeat after another one or two months and again before bottling.

• When wine is clear and all fermentation has stopped, siphon into wine bottles and cork the bottles securely. Leave corked bottles upright for 3-5 days and then store them on their side at 55 degrees Fahrenheit for six months (white wine) to a year (red wine) before sampling. If not up to expectations, allow to age another year or more.

Does this sound like the people in Bible times could just let their grape juice stand and it became alcohol right away? Well, this is what most people believe about wine in the Bible. It could not be further from the truth, and is only a myth!

Now here is how simple it is to preserve grape juice: Put grapes and water (10 pounds of grapes, 1 cup water) in a stew-pan. Heat until stones (seeds) and pulp separate. Then strain through jelly-bag, add (3 pounds) sugar, heat to boiling-point, and bottle. This will make one gallon. When served, it should be diluted one-half with water.

That is it! Which do you think they would rather do in Bible times? I have grapes in my back yard to experiment with. I left some grapes on the vine for nearly two month after they were ripe, and they were good until it began to freeze here. Now I know how to seal the ends of the vines and keep the grape clusters sealed in sand or saw dust for many months longer, and so did people in Bible times know how to do this.

My daughter takes care of a lady who has always made her own grape juice to keep each year. She just boils and seals the juice in a jar without the dregs. My wife's aunt says they have done this same thing for many years. Most people like grape juice that is not fermented or alcoholic. People have known for thousands of years in Israel and around the world how to preserve grape juice! To show this, Dr. Bacchiocchi, documents in detail what they knew in Bible times about the preservation of grape juice.— G.T. Panell]

PART II: THE PRESERVATION OF GRAPE JUICE

Fermentation Process: The ancients were acquainted with the fact of fermentation, even though they did not understand its causes. Just what happens during the conversion of grape juice into wine was not clearly understood until the 1860's, when Louis Pasteur undertook his study of fermentation. The ancients, however, were familiar with some of the methods by which fermentation can be prevented.

Grape juice contains two leading ingredients, glucose or grape sugar and albumen, both of which contribute to the fermentation process. The albumen, which is found in the lining of the skin and in the envelope of the seed of the grape, contains microscopic organisms which are the fermenting agents, known as ferments or yeast.

The decaying of the albumen in the grape juice affords conditions favorable for the multiplication of yeast germs which mix with those already present in the air and release a chemical enzyme capable of breaking down the grape sugar into two forms. One is ethyl alcohol, a colorless liquid that readily mixes with water and remains in solution in the wine. The other is carbon dioxide gas, which appears in tiny bubbles which give the appearance of ebullition.

The process of fermentation occurs only in the presence of certain conditions such as a moderate temperature, moisture and air in the grape juice. Now there are four major methods by which these conditions can be altered or eliminated and thus grape juice be preserved fresh and unfermented. We shall now consider each of these four methods, all of which were known to the ancients.

1. The Preservation of Grape Juice by Boiling

Moisture and Heat. The fermentation of grape juice can be prevented by reducing sufficiently its moisture content or by heating the juice at high temperature. The reason for this is that the growth of the yeast germs, which are the fermenting agents, slows or stops entirely when the moisture content of the grape juice is heated at 150º to 180º F. At such a temperature most of the ferments are destroyed. Both of these results are achieved by boiling the grape juice.

By boiling, the water of the grape juice evaporates, yeasts and molds are destroyed, and the sugar content increases, thus inhibiting yeast growth. This method of preserving grape juice unfermented by carefully boiling it down to a syrup was commonly and successfully used in the ancient world. When desired, the syrup would be drunk diluted with water. Several sources confirm this practice.

Ancient Testimonies. The most celebrated Roman poet, Virgil (70-19 B.C.), in his *Georgics* , pictures a housewife thus "She boils down by the fire the moisture of sweet must, and skims off with leaves the wavy froth of the simmering caldron."

This method was widely used, as indicated by Columella's lengthy description of how to preserve must successfully by boiling it down. "Care should also be taken," he writes, "so that the must, when it has been pressed out, may last well or at any rate keep until it is sold."

To ensure its preservation, Columella explains that "some people put the must in leaden vessels and by boiling reduce it by a quarter, others by a third. There is no doubt that anyone who boiled it down to one-half would be likely to make a better thick form of must."…

Safe Preservation When the necessary care was exercised, the boiled grape juice could be safely preserved for a long time. This required lengthy boiling and careful removal of all scum, as Columella explains: "If there is plenty of wood, it is better to boil the must and clear off all the scum with the dregs; if this is done a tenth part will be lost, but the rest keeps good forever." …

Wide Use of Boiled Grape Juice. The custom of preserving grape juice by boiling it down into a syrup has survived through the centuries in the Near East and Mediterranean countries. This beverage is known as *vino cotto* (boiled wine) in Italian, *vin cuit* in French, *nardenk* in Syriac and *dibs* in Arabic.

In its article on "Wine," the John Kitto's old but renowned *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature* quotes several nineteenth century historians on the use of boiled grape juice in the Near East. One of them, Dr. A. Russell, in his *Natural History of Aleppo* , writes: "The inspissated juice of the grape, *sapa vini* , called here *dibbs* , is brought to the city in skins, and sold in the public markets; it has much the appearance of coarse honey, is of sweet taste, and in great use among the people of all sorts."

Similarly, Cyrus Redding, in his *History of Modern Wines* , states: "On Mount Libanus, at Kesroan, good wines are made, but they are for the most part *vins cuits* (boiled wines). The wine is preserved in jars." J. D. Paxton, who witnessed a vintage in Lebanon, also says: "The juice that was extracted when I visited the press was not made into (what is now called) wine, but into what is called *dibs*." The common use of unfermented, "boiled wine" in the Near East during the nineteenth century is also attested by several travel accounts.

Rev. Henry Homes, an American missionary to Constantinople, in his article on wine published in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* (May 1848) gives this account of his observations: "Simple grape-juice, without the addition of any earth to neutralize the acidity, is boiled from four to five hours, so as to reduce it one-fourth the quantity put in.

After the boiling, for preserving it cool, and that it be *less liable to ferment* , it is put into earthen instead of wooden vessels, closely tied over with skin to exclude the air. It ordinarily has not a particle of intoxicating quality, being used freely by both Mohammedans [Muslims] and Christians. Some which I have had on hand for two years has undergone no change."…

Boiled Grape Juice among the Jews. Several reasons lead us to believe that the boiling process was most probably used also in ancient Israel to preserve grape juice. The art of making and preserving wine was common to Mediterranean countries where viticulture prevailed, and has survived to the present.

There are indications that the ancient Jews preserved wine by boiling it. John Kitto's *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature* says: "The Mishna states that the Jews were in the habit of using *boiled wine* . 'They do not boil the wine of the heave-offering, *because it diminishes it*,' and consequently thickens it, thus rendering the mingling of water with it when drunk necessary; but it is immediately added, 'Rabbi Yehudah permits this *because it improves it* ' (*Teroomoth Perek*)."

In the talmudic treatise entitled *'Abodah Zarah* there is a lengthy discussion on what some rabbis thought of the use of boiled wine. One of the issues discussed is whether a Jew could use boiled wine which he had handed over for storage to a Gentile… The fear was that the Gentile might have offered it to an idol.

Another issue discussed is whether boiled wine left uncovered became unfit for use. On this issue the renowned Rabbi Hiyya deliberated: "Boiled wine is not rendered unfit by being left uncovered." The reason given in the footnote is that "a snake does not drink it."

The popular notion appears to have been that snakes were fond of fermented wine but did not touch boiled wine. Consequently fermented wine needed to be covered lest it be poisoned by a snake, but boiled grape juice could remain uncovered because snakes would not touch it. These incidental remarks provide an indirect and yet compelling evidence that boiled wine was produced and used by Jews.

Boiled Grape Juice in Ancient Israel? It is hard to tell how extensive the use of boiled wine was in ancient Israel, but there is no reason to doubt that it was used. Some of the Biblical references to "honey— *debash*" could be referring to a sweet grape syrup.

The Hebrew *debash* corresponds to the Arabic *dibs*, which is the usual term for a sweet syrup made by boiling down the juice of grapes, raisins or dates. In his article on "honey" in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* , J. I. Ross writes: "The honey of the Bible was of three different kinds: (a) a thick grape syrup (Arabic *dibs*); (b) wild honey . . . (c) honey from domesticated bees."

Some scholars maintain that certain Old Testament texts refer not to bee's honey but to a grape syrup. For example, in the *Dictionnaire de la Bible* , J. A. de Bost states: "Some authors believe that several Old Testament texts, namely Genesis 43:11; Ezekiel 27:17, Jeremiah 41:8 do not refer to bee's honey but to a sweet beverage, a syrup that drips from ripe dates (these are the Hebrew scholars Maimonides, Josephus, Hiller, Celsius, Geddes, etc.).

They appeal, among other things, to the fact that the Hebrew word *debash*, which means honey, in Arabic has the meaning of dates. Other scholars maintain that the word must be understood as grapes' honey, that is, grape juice boiled with or without sugar until it becomes thick as a syrup (Rosenmüller).

This beverage is made even today in Syria and Palestine (Shaw, Russell, Burckhardt). Kilos of grapes produce 50 kilos of this beverage, called *dibs* (*debash*). It is used instead of sugar, diluting it with water. For the poor it replaces butter and for the sick wine. The Greeks and the Romans knew the honey of grapes."

The account of the spies in Numbers 13 may support the meaning of *debash* as the honey of grapes. The spies "came to the valley of Eshcol, and cut down from there a branch with a single cluster of grapes, and they carried it on a pole between two of them; they brought also some pomegranates and figs" (v. 23).

In front of the fruits which the spies brought back as proof of the fertility of the land, namely, an enormous cluster of grapes with pomegranates and figs, they said: "We came to the land to which you sent us; it flows with milk and honey *debash*], and this is its fruit" (v. 27).

Since the fruits shown to prove that the land flowed with "milk and honey" were especially the incredibly large grapes, "honey" may refer to boiled grape juice, known as "grapes' honey— *dibs*," produced with the kind of grapes displayed, and "milk" may signify the green pastures which nourished the milk-producing cows. The emphasis appears to be on the value of the natural products of the land.

The *Encyclopedia Biblica* notes in this regard that "in later Hebrew certainly, and in OT possibly, *debash* is also used to denote certain artificial preparations made from the juice of various fruits by inspissation, like the modern *dibs* . Reference has already been made to the theory that the ‘honey' with which the land of Canaan was said to 'flow' was this inspissated syrup; it has also been held that at least the honey intended for transport (Gen 43:11; 1 King 14:3) and export (Ezek 27:17) must be so understood."

Speaking of grape juice, the article continues, saying: "The early inhabitants of Canaan, however, as Bliss appears to have shown, were certainly acquainted with this manufacture. His excavations at Tell el-Hesy (Lachish) revealed two wine-presses with apparatus (as he judged) for boiling down the filtered juice (inspissation) into grape syrup."

The preceding observations give us reason to believe that the boiling process was most probably used by the ancient Jews to preserve grape juice unfermented…(please go to Dr. Bacchiocchi's web site *WINE IN THE BIBLE* to see the parts that were left out indicated by three dots… and also you can find the references. This information is found under the title: *THE PRESERVATION OF GRAPE JUICE* .

2. The Preservation of Grape Juice through Filtration.

When the fermentable pulp was pressed out together with the saccharin juice, a separation of the former was still possible by means of filtration. It is evident that the ancient means of filtration were far less sophisticated and efficient than those used by the wine industry today. Their basic method consisted of using a bag, called *sacco*, in which the grapes were placed. A vase was placed below the bag to receive the falling juice. Several Latin writers refer to the use of such strainers or filters in the preparation of wines.

A Biblical Allusion. Isaiah 25:6 may contain an allusion to the Biblical custom of filtering the must. The text reads: "On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow of wine on the lees well refined."

The word "wine" present in the two phrases, "wine on the lees" and "wine on the lees well refined" (RSV), is not found in the Hebrew text. Instead, the Hebrew term used is *shemarim*, which means "preserves," a term which can refer to vintage-produce.

Thus, a more accurate translation would be "a feast of vintage-produce" and "a feast of vintage-produce well cleansed." The Vulgate (Latin) translation respects this meaning: "a feast of vintage-produce (*convivium vindemiae*), a feast of vintage-produce well-cleansed (*vindemiae defaecatae*)."

In this verse God compares the blessings of the Gospel feast to His providing of two festal luxuries: fat things—rich, marrowy meats—and confections such as jellies and syrups. The former would be served in the most savory way and the latter in their purest state.

The "vintage-produce well cleansed" could refer to the filtered grape juice, which on account of its purity and sweetness was regarded, as we have seen, as most pleasant to drink. This harmless nutritious drink fits the emblem of the blessings of

salvation which here God promises to all the redeemed.

3. The Preservation of Grape Juice through Cold Storage

Below 40º Fahrenheit. The fermentation of grape juice can be prevented also by keeping it below 40º F (4º Celsius). Nearly all processes of fermentation cease at about 40º F. Fermentation is possible only between about 40º and 80º F (4º and 27º Celsius). Below the former point fermentation is inoperative and above the latter point the acetous supplants the vinous process. By lowering the temperature to about 40º F., the albumen settles at the bottom and the juice does not ferment.

Ancient Method. The ancients were familiar with this method of preservation. When they desired to preserve grape juice in its sweet, unfermented state, they would take a *namphora* and coat it with pitch within and without. Then they would fill it wit *hmustum lixivi* um—the must that flowed before the grapes would be pressed with a heavy beam—and they would seal it carefully with pitch.

It was then immersed in a pool of cool water or a cistern and allowed to remain undisturbed for six weeks or two months. After this process the grape juice could remain unfermented and hence it was called *semper mustum*, that is, *permanent must* .

We cited earlier a description of this process as given by Columella. To ensure that must remains *semper dulce* "always sweet," Columella prescribes this procedure: "Before the grape-skins are put under the press, take from the vat some of the freshest possible must and put it in a new wine-jar; then daub it over and cover it carefully with pitch, that thus no water may be able to get in.

"Then sink the whole flagon in a pool of cold, fresh water so that no part of it is above the surface. Then after forty days take it out of the water. The must will then keep sweet for as much as a year." Columella goes on to say that "for as long as it is properly cold, so long will it remain in good condition."

In the method described by Columella fermentation was prevented in two ways: (1) by the exclusion of the air, (2) by the reduction of the temperature. The yeast germs are introduced by the action of ordinary air into the fermentable juice. Thus, by placing the grape juice in air-tight wine jars, fermentation was unlikely to occur, especially since the jars were kept in a cold pool.

A similar description of this process is provided by Pliny. Speaking of the sweet wine called *aigleuko*s by the Greeks and *semper mustum* "permanent must" by the Romans, he says: "Care is needed for its production, as it must not be allowed to boil [*fervere*, to ferment]—that is the word the Romans used to denote the passage of must into wine.

Consequently, as soon as the must is taken from the vat and put into casks they plunge the casks in water till midwinter passes and regular cold weather sets in."

This method of preserving grape juice must have been in use long before the time of Pliny and Columella, because Cato (234-149 B.C.) mentions it two centuries before them: "If you wish to keep grape juice through the whole year, put the grape juice in an amphora, seal the stopper with pitch, and sink in the pond. Take it out after thirty days; it will remain sweet the whole year."

Gibeon's Wine Cellars. It seems reasonable to presume that the Jews knew and used the Roman method of preserving grape juice in air-tight jars, stored in a cold place. The various techniques for making and preserving wine, according to the Roman authors cited earlier, seemed to have been well known throughout the Mediterranean world. Explicit information about Palestine, however, is lacking.

Some indirect information is provided by James B. Pritchard, who excavated the ancient Gibeon where sixty-three storage wine-vats were found, with a holding capacity of 25,000 gallons. His reconstruction of the process of wine making at Gibeon includes the filtration of the pressed juice into two cylindrical tanks 2 ft. in diameter and 2 ft. deep.

After filtering the wine was stored in cool cellars in large jars sealed with olive oil. Pritchard tested a suggestion of a local wine maker that wine would keep from turning into vinegar in the cellar, if it was sealed with olive oil. The excavators stored a jar of wine sealed with a film of olive oil for a month in the cellars of Gibeon.

To their delight they found at the end of the month that the wine was perfectly preserved. The reason was that the oil provided a practical barrier preventing the oxidation of the wine.

The success of the experiment suggests the possibility that the same method could have been used for preserving unfermented grape juice. Freshly pressed grape juice, after being filtered to eliminate glutinous material, could have been stored in cool cellars in jars sealed with olive oil.

To some extent this method was used by my father when I was a boy. I recall helping him to filter the grape juice through a thick linen sack and then pouring the juice into bottles which were sealed with a film of oil and a tight cork. The bottles would be stored in a cool cellar.

Today, with the availability of bottle caps which seal bottles hermetically, my father follows a simpler procedure. He boils the must and pours it into bottles which he seals immediately with bottle caps pressed tight by a simple machine. He then stores the bottles in a cool cellar.

The frequent linkage in the Old Testament of olive oil and wine may suggest not only the common use of the two products, but also the dependency upon the former to preserve the latter.

4. The Preservation of Grape Juice

Through Sulfur Fumigation

Sulfur Fumigation. The fermentation of grape juice can also be prevented by the fumes of sulfur dioxide. The method consists in filling the jars nearly full with fresh unfermented grape juice, then burning sulfur dioxide in the empty portion, and while the sulfur fumes are present, the jars are tightly closed. Another possibility is to pour the must into jars or bottles which have been strongly treated with sulfur fumes. The sulfur absorbs the oxygen of the air and inhibits the formation of yeast germs. Sulfur dioxide is widely used today in the wine industry to deal with some of the infection to which wine is subject.

Ancient Use of Sulfur. The use of sulfur to preserve wine was known in the ancient world. In a chapter devoted to various methods used to preserve wine, Pliny speaks of Cato who "mentions sulfur." Horace alludes to this practice in a poem dedicated to the celebration of a glad anniversary: "This festal day, each time the year revolves, shall draw a well-pitched cork forth from a jar set to drink the smoke in Tullus' consulship."The next stanza suggests that this fumigated wine was unfermented, because a hundred cups of it could be drunk without causing "clamor et ira," that is, "brawls and anger."…

The study conducted in this chapter on the ancient methods of preserving both fermented wine and unfermented grape juice should help dispel two major misconceptions [myths]: (1) In the ancient world it was easy to preserve fermented wine because all that it takes is to let the pressed juice ferment naturally; (2) In the ancient world it was impossible to preserve the grape juice unfermented because people had neither the technical knowledge nor the means to prevent fermentation.

We have found that both of these popular notions are unfounded. The problems the ancients encountered in preserving fermented wine were as great as, if not actually greater, than, those faced in preserving unfermented grape juice.

I would like to chime in on the wine discussion. I believe the unfermented wine theory unravels with the pull of a thread. That thread is found when Jesus speaks a parable of wineskins. (This is what someone wrote to us on the subject of the 'parable of wineskins' so let's see what **Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi says about it.**)

Importance of the Saying. Christ's allusions to wine in Matthew 9:17 and Luke 5:39 are seen by moderationists as an indication of His approval of the moderate use of alcoholic wine… The first saying occurs in the three parallel passages (Matt 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37-38). The second is found only in Luke 5:39 as an additional statement not found in the narratives of either Matthew or Mark.

Since Luke incorporates both sayings, we shall confine ourselves to the passage as found in Luke, which says: "And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. And no one after drinking old wine desires new; for he says, 'the old is good'" (Luke 5:37-39).

"New Wine": Fermented or Unfermented? The phrase "new wine" (oinos neos) occurs in the New Testament only in this passage and those parallel to it. The question here is the nature of the "new wine." Is it fermented or unfermented? A common view is that it denotes wine recently pressed, but already in a state of active fermentation. Such wine, it is said, could only be safely placed in new wineskins, because they alone were elastic enough to withstand the pressure of the gas-producing fermentation.

This view is expressed, for example, by Jimmy L. Albright in his dissertation on "Wine in the Biblical World." He writes: "The biblical mention of bursting wineskins (Matt 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37) shows that gas-producing fermentation took place in the wines produced in Israel, a chemical action that began within a few hours after the pressing of the grapes.

The juice usually had begun to ferment as it stood in the lower pressing vats but was soon poured into jars or into skins. . . . Freshly made wine was put into new wineskins; old skins would burst under the pressure."

In a similar vein R. C. Lenski comments: "When it is fresh, the skin stretches to a degree, but when it is old it becomes stiff and bursts quickly under pressure. People therefore never put new wine, which still ferments and causes pressure, into old, dried-out skins."

This popular interpretation is very imaginative but not factual. Anyone familiar with the pressure caused by the gas-producing fermentation knows that no bottle, whether of skin or glass, can withstand such pressure. Job knew this when he said: "Behold, my heart is like wine that has no vent; like new wineskins , it is ready to burst" (Job 32:19).

The Encyclopedia Biblica acknowledges this fact, saying: "It is impossible that the must could ever have been put into skins to undergo the whole process of fermentation, as is usually stated, the action of the gas given off in the early stages of the process being much too violent for any skins to withstand. Where a large quantity of grapes had to be trodden, it was necessary to relieve the wine vat by transferring the must immediately to earthenware jars, of which the Jews possessed a large variety."

Unfermented Grape Juice "The difficulty connected with this parabolic word," as Alexander B. Bruce rightly points out, "is not critical or exegetical, but scientific. The question has been raised: could even new, tough skins stand the process of fermentation?"

The answer is obviously negative. Thus, Bruce himself suggests that "Jesus was not thinking at all of fermented, intoxicating wine, but of 'must,' a non-intoxicating beverage, which could be kept safely in new leather bottles, but not in old skins which had previously contained ordinary wine, because particles of albuminoid matter adhering to the skin would set up fermentation and develop gas with an enormous pressure."

Some argue that the "new wine" spoken of must have been "a new wine which had not fully fermented, but which had come so near the completion of that process that it could with safety be put into new skins, whose elasticity would be sufficient to resist the 'after-fermentation' which would ensue." The weakness of this hypothesis is twofold.

First, wine which was near the completion of the process of fermentation could have safely been stored in old wineskins as well, because the neck opening would have provided an adequate release for the remaining fermenting gas. Second, the fermentation process, when permitted, was carried on not in wineskins, but in large jars, known as habith in Hebrew and dolium to the Romans.

The only "new wine" which could be stored safely in new wineskins was unfermented must, after it had been filtered or boiled. The skin would be prepared like the amphora, by smearing it with honey or pitch, and after the must was poured in, it would be tightly closed and sealed.

The reason that a new skin was required for new wine is that an old skin would almost inevitably have, as Lees and Burns explain, "some of the decayed albuminous matter adhering to their sides." This would cause the new wine to ferment. On the other hand, if new wineskins were used to store unfermented new wine, no fermentation-causing agents would be present in the skins themselves. Thus, the wine would be preserved from fermentation and the wineskins from rupture.

A Pagan Testimony It is significant to note in this regard that Columella, the renowned Roman agriculturist who was a contemporary of the apostles, emphasizes the need to use a new amphora to preserve fresh must unfermented: "That must may remain always sweet as though it were fresh, do as follows.

"Before the grape-skins are put under the press, take from the vat some of the freshest possible must and put it in a new wine-jar [amphoram novam], then daub it over and cover it carefully with pitch, that thus no water may be able to get in. Then sink the whole flagon in a pool of cold, fresh water so that no part of it is above the surface. Then after forty days take it out of the water. The must will then keep sweet for as much as a year."

A similar method was used with new wineskins, which were prepared, like the amphora, by being smeared with honey and pitch, and after being filled with must, were sealed and buried in the earth.

Any of the processes described in the previous chapter, such as filtration, boiling, exclusion of air, sulfur fumigation, and reduction of the temperature below 40º F. (4º Celsius), would have been counted on to ensure the preservation of the new wine unfermented in new wineskins. Any two or all of these methods could be combined to ensure the prevention of fermentation.

The Meaning of the Saying. This interpretation is further confirmed by the symbolic meaning of Christ's saying. The imagery of new wine in new wineskins is an object lesson in regeneration. As fittingly explained by Ernest Gordon, "The old wineskins, with their alcoholic lees, represented the Pharisees' corrupt nature.

The new wine of the Gospel could not be put into them. They would ferment it. 'I came not to call the self-righteous but repentant sinners.' The latter by their conversion become new vessels, able to retain the new wine without spoiling it (Mark 2:15-17, 22). So, by comparing intoxicating wine with degenerate Pharisaism, Christ clearly intimated what his opinion of intoxicating wine was."

"It is well to notice," Ernest Gordon continues, "how in this casual illustration, he [Christ] identifies wine altogether with unfermented wine. Fermented wine is given no recognition. It could be put into any kind of wineskin, however sorry and corrupt.

But new wine is like new cloth, which is too good to be used in patching rags. It is a thing clean and wholesome, demanding a clean container. The natural way in which this illustration is used suggests at least a general, matter-of-fact understanding among his Jewish hearers that the real fruit of the vine, the good wine, was unfermented."

IS OLD WINE BETTER?

Importance of the Saying In Luke Christ's saying about new wine in fresh wineskins is followed by a similar and yet different statement: "And no one after drinking old wine desires new; for he says, "The old is good'" (Luke 5:39). Though this statement is not found in the other Gospels, it forms an integral part of the narrative.

Moderationists attach fundamental importance to this statement because it contains, in their view, Christ's outspoken commendation of alcoholic wine. Kenneth L. Gentry, for example, speaks of "the well-nigh universal prevalence of men to prefer old (fermented) wine over new (pre- or unfermented) wine. The Lord himself makes reference to this assessment among men in Luke 5:39: 'And no one, after drinking old wine, wishes for new; for he says, The old is good enough.'"

Everett Tilson sees Luke 5:39 as one of the most challenging texts against those who favor abstinence. He writes: "This attempt to defend Jesus' preference for the 'new' [unfermented] to the 'old' [fermented] wine falls victim to the passage in Luke 5:39, long one of the most difficult passages for biblical literalists who favor abstinence.

Without a word of criticism, as if expressing a truism with which he himself agrees, Luke records Jesus as saying: 'And no one after drinking old wine desires new.' Why? 'The old is good,' he answers (5:39)—though far more likely to be both fermented and intoxicating!"

Meaning of "New Wine " The first question to address in our study of this passage is whether the "new wine" here has the same meaning as in the two preceding verses. Some think it does not. They see the "new wine" of verse 38 as being wine not fully fermented and that of verse 39 as fully fermented wine but without the mellowness which comes with age. Lees and Burns, the authors of The Temperance Bible-Commentary , favor the view that the "new wine" of verse 38 is "identical in nature, and representative of the same Christian blessings, with the 'old wine' of verse 39—being the new preserved and improved by age."

The meaning of "new wine" in this passage cannot be determined by its general usage in Scripture because in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), the phrase oinos neo s—"new wine" is used to translate both fermented wine as in Job 32:19 and unfermented grape juice as in Isaiah 49:26. In the latter it translates the Hebrew asis which designates unfermented grape juice.

In the passage under consideration it is legitimate to infer that "new wine" has the same meaning in the whole passage, because it is used consecutively without any intimation of change of meaning. The metaphors in both sayings are used without confusion or contradiction. This means that if the "new wine" of verse 38 is, as shown earlier, unfermented grape juice, the same must be true of the "new wine" of verse.

Meaning of "Old Wine" Before discussing whether or not Christ expressed a judgment on the superior quality of "old wine" over "new wine," it is important to determine whether the "old wine" spoken of is fermented or unfermented. From the viewpoint of quality, age "improves" the flavor not only of fermented wine but also of unfermented grape juice.

Though no chemical change occurs, grape juice acquires a finer flavor by being kept, as its fine and subtle particles separate from the albuminous matter and other sedimentations. Thus, the "old wine" esteemed good could refer to grape juice preserved and improved by age.

The context, however, favors the meaning of fermented wine, since Christ uses the metaphor of the "old wine" to represent the old forms of religion and the "new wine" the new form of religious life He taught and inaugurated. In this context, fermented old wine better represents the corrupted forms of the old Pharisaic religion.

Is "Old Wine" Better? In the light of this conclusion, it remains to be determined if Christ by this saying is expressing a value judgment on the superiority of "old [fermented] wine" over "new wine." A careful reading of the text indicates that the one who says "The old is good" is not Christ but anyone who has been drinking "old wine."

In other words, Christ is not uttering His own opinion, but the opinion of those who have acquired a taste for the old wine. He says simply that anyone who has acquired a taste for old wine does not care for new. We know this to be the case. Drinking alcoholic beverages begets an appetite for stimulants and not for alcohol-free juices.

Christ's saying does not represent His judgment regarding the superiority of old, fermented wine. Several commentators emphasize this point. In his Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Norval Geldenhuys says: "The point at issue here has nothing to do with the comparative merits of old and new wine, but refers to the predilection for old wine in the case of those who are accustomed to drink it."

The same point is emphasized by Henry Alford in his commentary on the Gospel of Luke. He says: "Observe that there is no objective comparison whatever here between old and new wine; the whole stress is on desireth [desires] and for he saith [says], and the import of better is subjective: in the view of him who utters it."

R. C. H. Lenski states the same truth most concisely: "It is not Jesus who calls the old wine 'good enough,' but he that drank it. A lot of old wine is decidedly bad because it has not been prepared properly; age is one thing, excellence with age quite another."

In a similar vein, Dr. Jack Van Impe writes: "Does not Jesus say [in Luke 5:39] that old wine is better? Not at all. He simply says that one who has been drinking old wine says it is better. This shows the Lord's understanding of the habit-forming effect of beverage alcohol.

His statement stands true today. Try to sell grape juice on skid row and you will probably have no takers. Those who drink old wine (intoxicating wine) prefer it. They are hooked on it. . . . The secondary message of the parable, then, actually argues for the superiority of new (unfermented) wine, using it as a picture of salvation."

The Context of the "Old Wine" The view that old, fermented wine is better than new wine, would be false even if everyone on earth believed it! And in the passage we are considering is contradicted by the context in which it occurs and by the whole purpose of the illustration.

In the immediate context Jesus uses the same word (palaios) of old garments, which He obviously did not esteem as better than new ones. The statement about "old wine" seems to contradict the preceding one about "old garment," but the contradiction disappears when one understands the purpose of the illustration.

In his article on "oinos" ("Wine") in the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament , Heinrich Seeseman notes the apparent

contradiction and the significance of the context: "Luke 5:39 seems to contradict what goes before, since it favors the retention of the old. In the context of Luke, however, it is regarded as a warning against over-estimation of the old."

The purpose of the illustration is not to praise the superiority of old wine but to warn against an over-estimation of the old forms of religiosity promoted by the Pharisees. Such religiosity consisted, as verse 33 indicates, in the fulfillment of such external ascetic practices as frequent fasting and public prayer.

To justify the fact that His disciples did not adhere to such external forms of religiosity, Christ used four illustrations: wedding guests do not fast in the presence of the bridegroom (vv. 34-35); new cloth is not used to patch an old garment (v. 36); new wine is not placed in old wineskins (vv. 37-38); new wine is not liked by those accustomed to drink the old (v. 39).

The common purpose of all the four illustrations is to help people accustomed to the old forms of religion, and unacquainted with the new form of religious life taught by Christ, to recognize that the old seems good only so long as one is not accustomed to the new, which in and of itself is better.

In this context, the old fermented wine seems good only to those who do not know the better new wine. In his book Alcohol and the Bible, Stephen Reynolds perceptively points out the broader implications of Christ's illustration about the old wine.

He says: "Christ warns against the over-estimation of Pharisaism (old wine), but the figure of speech carries with it more than the thought that the Gospel should be regarded more highly than Pharisaism. It also strongly suggests that to those who are perceptive of truth, new wine (unfermented grape juice) is preferable to old (intoxicating) wine. Only the natural man with corrupted taste thinks otherwise." (**Wine in the Bible: A Biblical study on the use of alcoholic beverages by Dr. Bacchiocchi**)

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Myths About Wine and Alcohol in the Bible

Part 2

Compiled by: Gary Panell

This [section, taken from Wine in the Bible: A Biblical study on the use of alcoholic beverages by Dr. Bacchiocchi] is divided into four parts, the first three of which deal with wine-texts and the last one with the admonitions to sobriety and to temperance [abstinence]. Thus, the outline of the chapter is as follows:

1. Acts 2:13: "Filled with New Wine"

2. 1 Corinthians 11:21: "One is Hungry and Another is Drunk"

3. Ephesians 5:18: "Do Not Get Drunk with Wine"

4. [Abstinence in the New Testament]

PART I: ACTS 2:13: "FILLED WITH NEW WINE"

Importance of the Text. The apostles had scarcely begun their Messianic proclamation when they were accused of drunkenness. On the day of Pentecost the first company of believers received the gift of tongues enabling them to preach the Gospel in the languages of the people gathered for the feast at Jerusalem. While thousands believed in Christ as a result of the miracle, others began mocking the disciples, saying: "They are filled with new wine" (Acts 2:13).

Some interpret this text as indicating the customary drinking of alcoholic wine in the earliest apostolic community. This interpretation rests on three major assumptions. First, the mockers would not have accused Christians of being drunk unless they had seen some Christians drinking on previous occasions. Second, the "new wine" (*gleukos*) was a "sweet wine" of alcoholic nature which could make a person drunk if consumed in large quantity. Third, Peter in his response denied the charge not by saying, "How can we be drunk when we are abstainers?" but by pointing to the early hour of the morning: "These men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day" (Acts 2:15).

Unwarranted Interpretation. This interpretation is unwarranted for three major reasons. It assumes that the accusation of the mockers was based on factual observation of Christian drinking. This is a gratuitous assumption, because mockers do not necessarily base their slander on factual observation. Even if they did, what they presumably had seen was Christians under the influence of the Holy Spirit rather than of alcoholic spirits. It is possible that they were misled by what they saw. The Jewish philosopher Philo, who lived at that time, tells us that the most sober persons, "abstainers," when under the influence of divine inspiration seemed to others to be in a drunken state.

This possibility, however, seems hardly applicable here, because if the mockers really wished to charge the disciples with drunkenness, they would have accused them of being filled with "wine" (*oinos*) and not with "grape-juice" (*gleukos*). The term "*gleukos*" was used to designate unfermented grape juice. Pliny, for example, explicitly explains that what the Greeks call "*aigleucos*, this is our permanent must." He goes on to tell how to prevent its fermentation.

The Meaning of "*Gleukos*." Several Greek lexicons and scholars acknowledge that *gleukos* designates exclusively unfermented grape juice. For example, Horace Bumstead, the author of one of the most scholarly defenses of the moderationist view, offers this clear and conclusive explanation: "*Gleukos*, as in classical Greek, corresponds to the Latin *mustum* meaning the newly expressed juice of the grape, and so has a less wide range of meaning than [the Hebrew] *tirosh* or *asis*.

It occurs only once [Acts 2:13] and I see no necessity for trying to prove it intoxicating, as some have done, including Robinson. . . . It seems to me that Alford, and others, in arguing for the intoxicating character of *gleukos*, as a *sweet* wine, have lost sight of the classical distinction already pointed out between *gleukos* = *mustum*, sweet, because unfermented grape juice, and *oinos glukus* =sweet wine, so-called because, though fermented, it was rich in sugar."

Earlier in his lengthy article (71 pages) published in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Bumstead explains more fully that "with the Greeks the product of the wine-press could be sweet in three different senses: first, as *gleukos* (corresponding to the Latin *mustum*), when it was sweet from the lack of vinous fermentation; second, as *oinos glukus*, when it was fermented, but sweet from the presence of considerable untransformed sugar; and third, as *oinos hedus*, when it was sweet from the absence of acetous fermentation, or souring." *What this means is that when gleukos occurs by itself, as in Acts 2:13, it refers specifically to unfermented grape juice.*

The Irony of the Charge. In view of the meaning of *gleukos* as unintoxicating grape juice, the irony of the charge is self-evident. What the mockers meant is "These men, too abstemious to touch anything fermented, have made themselves drunk on grape juice." Or as Ernest Gordon puts it in modern speech, "These drys are drunk on soft drink." Bumstead perceptively asks, "If this was not the point of their 'mocking' how can the use of *gleukos*, instead of the common word *oinos*, be accounted for?" The inadequacy of the cause, grape juice, to produce the effect, drunkenness, is designed to add point to the derisive jest.

One can hardly fail to see in the irony of the charge that the apostles were drunk on grape juice (their usual beverage) an indirect but very important proof of their abstinent life-style and inferentially of the abstemious life-style of their Teacher.

Historical Confirmation. In his epistles, Peter, who acts as the spokesman of the Jerusalem Church in the first twelve chapters of Acts, alludes, as we shall see later in this chapter, to the practice of abstinence in the apostolic church. Later historical confirmation of this practice is provided by the testimony of Hegesippus, a church historian who, as Eusebius tells us, "lived immediately after the apostles." Writing regarding "James, the brother of the Lord, [who] succeeded to the government of the Church in conjunction with the apostles," Hegesippus says: "He was holy from his mother's womb; and he drank no wine nor strong drink, nor did he eat flesh." We can assume that the strict abstinent life-style of James, who for a time served as the presiding officer of the Jerusalem Church, served as an example for Apostolic Christians to follow.

An investigation of early Christian sources on the life-style of such Jewish Christian sects as the Ebionites, the Nazarenes, the Elkesaites and the Encratites, might provide considerable support for abstinence from fermented wine in the Apostolic Church. The fact that some of these sects went to the extreme of rejecting altogether both fermented and unfermented wine and using only water, even in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, suggests the existence of a prevailing concern for abstinence in the Apostolic Church. Such a concern apparently assumed fanatical forms among certain religious groups. It is my intention to pursue this research as time becomes available and to publish it as an additional chapter in a future edition of this book. Time restraints have not made this research possible at this time.

Peter's Response. The assumption that Peter's response to the charge of drunkenness implies that the apostles used some kind of fermented wine, because he did not flatly deny the charge, is discredited by two major considerations. Peter used the argument best suited to the character of the mockers. Had he said, "How can we be drunk when we never drink?" the jeering rejoinder might have been, "Except when no one sees you!" An appeal to their abstemious life-style would have been useless since it was already challenged.

Thus, Peter met them on social grounds, challenging the credibility of their assumption. In effect he replied: "How can your assumption be right that we are drunk when it is only nine o'clock in the morning? You know, as well as I do, that people get drunk in the evening and not in the morning." Such a reply fit in the circumstance and exposed the insincerity of the mockers.

A second reason that Peter may have chosen not to deny flatly that they drank at all is suggested by the use of the word *gleukos* by the mockers. This word, we just observed, means unfermented grape juice which Christians, except the Nazirites, generally drank. To deny that Christians drank at all would have meant denying that they drank *gleukos* ("grape juice"), but that was not true.

Conclusion. Summing up we can say that Acts 2:13 provides an indirect but telling proof that the apostles abstained from alcoholic beverages. As Ernest Gordon says, "There would be no point in referring to unfermented wine as a source of intoxication and the strange actions following, if it were not generally understood that the apostles used no intoxicating wine."

PART II: 1 CORINTHIANS 11:21

"ONE IS HUNGRY AND ANOTHER IS DRUNK"

Importance of the Text. Moderationists see in Paul's reference to "drunkenness" at the communion table in the Corinthian church an unmistakable proof that alcoholic wine was used in the Apostolic Church both privately at home and publicly at the Lord's Supper. Paul's statement reads as follows: "When you meet together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal, and one is hungry and another is drunk" (1 Cor 11:20-21).

The reasoning of moderationists is that the problem of drunkenness at Corinth can only be explained by their use of alcoholic wine. As someone put it, "How could the Corinthians get drunk on Communion wine if it were not fermented?" Furthermore, it is argued that "it is significant to note that even in the light of their drunkenness, Paul does *not* issue a 'cease and desist' order in this matter." The argument is clear. Paul condemned the abuses at Corinth but not the use of alcoholic wine. We shall examine this claim by considering three points: (1) The Nature of the Feast; (2) The Meaning of the Verb *Methuo*; (3) The Implications of Paul's Admonition.

1. The Nature of the Feast

A Selfish Love Feast. To better appreciate the problems that developed at Corinth in conjunction with the Lord's Supper, we must understand the social customs of the time. It was customary for groups of people belonging to secular or religious organizations to meet together for common meals. In particular there was a certain kind of fellowship meal called *eranos* to which each participant brought food pooled together to make a common feast.

The early Church adapted this custom, developing it into what came to be known as the *Agape* or Love Feast. All the church members brought what they could to the feast, and when all the food was pooled together, they sat down to a common meal. It was a lovely way of producing and nourishing real Christian fellowship. Many churches practice something similar today when they have a pot-luck meal together after church service.

In the church at Corinth the Love Feast seems to have been incorporated within the Lord's Supper, as we shall show below. Its celebration, however, degenerated into a selfish feast. The art of sharing was lost. The rich did not share their food with the poor but ate it by themselves in little exclusive groups. The result was that at the meal some were hungry while others were filled to satiety. Class distinctions, which should have been eliminated at the communion table, were accentuated. Good order and decency were disregarded, and the solemnity of the occasion was lost.

Unhesitatingly and unsparingly Paul rebukes this state of affairs, first of all by reminding the Corinthians of the purpose of their assembling together, namely, "to eat the Lord's supper" (1 Cor 11:20, KJV). The meaning of Paul's rebuke could be paraphrased as follows: "Though you come together professedly to partake of the Lord's Supper, you really do not celebrate it in a manner deserving of the name.

For in eating, each one who has brought provisions goes ahead to eat eagerly and selfishly, ignoring the poor who have not been able to bring anything. The result is that while a member is *hungry* and unsatisfied, another is *filled* to satiety. Don't you have houses in

which to eat and drink? Why do you transform the house of worship, dedicated to brotherly love, into a place of selfish feasting, putting to shame those who have nothing? There is no way I can commend you for such selfish conduct" (paraphrase of 1 Cor 11:20-23).

Private Supper or Lord's Supper? Paul's rebuke suggests that Christians in Corinth had unwisely confused the Lord's Supper with a social meal; possibly they had even reduced the Lord's Supper to a social festival similar to the festivals observed among the Greeks. The latter suggestion seems more probable, because there is no indication in the passage that a fellowship meal preceded the actual Lord's Supper.

Paul's statement, "When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat" (1 Cor 11:20) clearly indicates that the purpose of the gathering was to celebrate the Lord's Supper, which, however, they had transformed into an ordinary festivity, presumably patterned after the feasts in honor of idols. This leads us to the following conclusion: *all* that was done at Corinth was irregular and improper. The Christians had entirely mistaken the nature of the sacred ordinance of the Lord's Supper, converting it into a secular festivity, where even intemperance prevailed.

Many have supposed that the fellowship meal at Corinth was derived from the Last Supper which Jesus instituted *after* eating the Passover with His disciples. But it must be observed that the Passover was never seen by Christians as corresponding to a *preliminary* fellowship meal to be followed by the Lord's Supper.

Instead, Passover was a sacred festival which was understood to be superseded by the Lord's Supper. There is no evidence in the Corinthian passage before us, or in any other New Testament passage, that the Lord's Supper was observed in connection with a fellowship meal. This means that whatever was done at Corinth was irregular, improper and against the very instructions that Paul had "received from the Lord" and had "delivered" to the church (1 Cor 11:23).

In the light of this fact, any alleged "drunkenness" occurring at the Communion table of the Corinthian church can hardly serve to prove the existence of drinking of alcoholic beverages in the Apostolic Church. A local perversion can scarcely be indicative of a general Christian practice. Moreover, if the Corinthians deviated from the instructions "delivered" unto them, then their misconduct is more a *warning* than an example for us.

2. The Meaning of the Verb *Methuo*

"Filled to the Full." It is generally assumed that drunkenness occurred at the Communion table of the Corinthian church. But is this true? Those who believe so base their conclusion on the common translation of the verb *methuei* , namely, "is drunk." The whole phrase in the RSV reads: "One is hungry and another is drunk" (1 Cor 11:21). On the basis of this translation many reason that if intoxicating wine was used by the Corinthians without apostolic rebuke, it can also be used by Christians today.

The fundamental fallacy of such reasoning is that it assumes that *methuo* means only "to be drunk." But our study of its usage in John 2:11 has shown that the verb *methuo* does not always signify intoxication and drunkenness. The context determines its exact meaning. In this case *methuei* is used antithetically to *peina* "hungry" and this requires that the verb be understood in the generic sense of "satiated" rather than in the narrow sense of "drunk."

Leon C. Field makes this point clearly and conclusively: "*Methuei* , in this case, is plainly contrasted with *peina* which is correctly rendered as 'hungry.' The antithesis, therefore, requires the former to be understood in the generic sense of 'surfeited,' not in the narrow sense of 'drunken.' The overfilled man is compared to the underfilled man. This is the interpretation adopted by the great body of expositors, ancient and modern."

Scholarly Support. Among the expositors cited by Field are Chrysostom, Bengel, Grotius, Wycliff, Kuinoel, Bilroth, MacKnight, Newcome, Bloomfield, Clarke, Lightfoot, Dean Stanley, and Whedom. Another who could be mentioned is Clement of Alexandria, who lived only a century and a half after Paul. In his *Instructor* (book 2, 1), Clement, as A. W. Samson points out, "contradicts the suggestion that intoxicating wine was there used. He indicates that it is *food* rather than the *drink* of the feast to which Paul refers, and that he reproves them for 'clutching at the delicacies,' for 'eating beyond the demands of nourishment.'"

Adam Clarke makes the same point in his commentary on this text: "The people came together, and it appears brought their provisions with them; some had much, others had less; some ate to excess, others had scarcely enough to suffice nature. 'One was hungry, and the other was drunken, *methuei*, was filled to the full;' this is the sense of the word in many places of Scripture."

The Greek translation of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint, provides numerous examples where *methuo* is used in the generic sense of "filled to the full." One of them is Psalm 23:5 which says: "my cup overflows" (*methuskon* —full to the brim). Another example is Psalm 65:10: "Thou waterest its furrows abundantly [*methuson*]." Yet another is Jeremiah 31:14: "I will feast [*methuso* — satiate] the soul of the priests with abundance." Examples such as these clearly show that *methuo* is often used in Scripture in a generic sense to express full satisfaction, satiety.

3. The Implications of Paul's Admonition

No Allusion to Drunkenness. Paul's rebuke and admonition suggest that drunkenness was not the problem at the Communion table of the Corinthian church. His words of rebuke are, "What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?" (v. 22). If drunkenness had been the problem, presumably Paul would have said, "Do you not have houses to eat and get drunk in?" The fact that Paul in his rebuke makes no allusion to "drunkenness" suggests that the problem at Corinth was not intoxication with alcoholic wine but rather one of excessive indulgence in eating and drinking.

If it were true that the Corinthian Christians were guilty of the awful sin of becoming inebriated during the celebration of the Lord's Supper, Paul would have condemned their sacrilegious conduct in different and much sterner language. In the previous chapter Paul does not hesitate to call the participation of some Corinthians at pagan religious meals as "to be partners with demons" (1 Cor 10:20).

Then he adds: "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons" (1 Cor 10:21). Earlier in the same epistle Paul categorically states that no "drunkards . . . will inherit the kingdom of God" and he admonishes the members "not to associate with any one who bears the name of brother if he is . . . [a] drunkard" (1 Cor 6:10;

5:11). On the basis of this admonition it is fair to suppose that if some got drunk at the Communion table, Paul would have warned the rest to stay away from them.

Implication of the Admonition. Paul does not use strong language in condemning the abuses occurring in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. He merely admonishes the Corinthians to satisfy their hunger at home to avoid both the indecorum that had been manifested and the condemnation to which it had exposed them: "So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another — if any one is hungry, let him eat at home—lest you come together to be condemned" (1 Cor 11:33-34).

This admonition suggests that the problem at Corinth was indulgence in eating rather than intoxication by drinking alcoholic wine. Had the Corinthian church members been drunk at the Communion table, then Paul could hardly have said earlier in the same letter that in the past some of them were drunkards "but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor 6:11).

Conclusion. In the light of the above considerations we conclude that Paul's reference in the King James Version to "drunkenness" at the Communion table of the Corinthian church, offers no support for a moderate use of alcoholic wine either privately at home or publicly at the Lord's Supper. First, because whatever was done at Corinth,was a departure from the instructions Paul had "delivered" to the church and thus their actions are more of a *warning* than an example for us. Second, because the problem at the Communion table, as we have shown, appear not to have been intoxication with alcoholic wine but indulgence in eating.

PART III: EPHESIANS 5:18

"DO NOT GET DRUNK WITH WINE"

Importance of the Text. After admonishing the Ephesians to abstain from immorality and impurity, Paul particularizes his admonition saying: "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph 5:18). Moderationists see in this passage a clear Biblical sanction of moderate drinking. They argue that what Paul condemns here is the *abuse* and not the *moderate use* of alcoholic wine. "The condemnation of misuse of wine," writes Markus Barth, "does not preclude a proper use of alcoholic beverage."

Had Paul intended to forbid wine-drinking altogether, they claim, he would have said, as Kenneth Gentry puts it, "Drink no wine at all." Instead he said, "Be not *drunk* with wine" (Eph 5:18). The next phrase, "for that is debauchery" (RSV) or "wherein is excess" (KJV), is similarly interpreted as referring to the state of drunkenness and not to wine as the active principle of debauchery. Horace Bumstead, for example, maintains that "to connect *en ho* [in which] with *oinos* [wine], as some do, instead of with *methu-skesthe oino* [drunk with wine], is inconsistent with the employment of so strong a word as *methuskethe* [drunk]."

We shall examine the above claim by considering five points: (1) The Structure of the Passage, (2) The Relative Clause, (3) Ancient and Modern Translations, (4) The Meaning of *Asotia*, and (5) Rabbinical Testimonies.

1. The Structure of the Passage

Two Contrasting Statements. The passage consists of two major statements placed in contrast (antithesis) to each other: "drunk with wine" *versus* "filled with the Spirit." The antithesis suggests that the contrast is not between moderation and excess, but between fullness of wine and fullness of the Spirit. The two statements point to an inherent incompatibility of nature and operation between the *sources* of such fullness, namely, inebriating wine and the Holy Spirit. The fact that inebriating wine and the Holy Spirit are mutually exclusive, because no one can be filled with half of each, precludes the sanction for a moderate use of intoxicating wine.

This point is made clearer by quoting the preceding text, which says: "Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is," namely, that we should be filled not with ardent spirits but with the Holy Spirit. Thus, the structure of the passage suggests that Paul is not recommending a supposedly safe and moderate ingestion of wine, but a full infilling of the Holy Spirit. It is scarcely conceivable that a person "filled with the Spirit" would crave intoxicating wine.

Two Similar Passages. Numerous commentators, not themselves abstainers, illustrate this text by referring to two similar texts. The first is Luke 1:15 where the angel says to Zechariah concerning John the Baptist: "And he shall drink no wine nor strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit." The second passage is from the story of Pentecost and consists of two verses: "For these men are not drunk . . ." "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:15, 4).

In both of these passages the infilling of the Holy Spirit is connected to abstention from intoxicating drink. The striking similarity between these two passages and Ephesians 5:18 suggests that in the latter text also the infilling of the Holy Spirit precludes the drinking of alcoholic beverages.

In his comment on Luke 1:15, Hermann Olshausen aptly says: "Man feels the want of strengthening through spiritual influences from without; instead of seeking for these in the Holy Spirit, he in his blindness has recourse to the *natural* spirit, that is, to wine and strong drink. Therefore, according to the point of view of the Law, the Old Testament recommends abstinence from wine and strong drinks in order to preserve the soul free from all merely natural influences, and by that means to make it more susceptible of the operations of the Holy Spirit."

"Drink no Wine at All." The antithesis between wine and Holy Spirit present in Luke 1:15 and Acts 2:15, 4 may have been borrowed by Paul to express a similar truth in Ephesians 5:18. This may explain why Paul wrote "Do not get drunk with wine" instead of "Drink no wine at all." Like Luke, he may have wished to emphasize the contrast between fullness of wine and fullness of the Spirit.

Another reason that Paul may have chosen not to say "Drink no wine at all" is suggested by 1 Timothy 5:23, where he recommends the use of "a little wine" for medical purposes: "for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments." ... The fact that Paul believed that there was a legitimate, though limited, use of "wine" would logically have precluded him from prohibiting the use of wine altogether in any form.

We must also remember that the generic term *oinos* "wine," as we have shown in [another section], could refer either to fermented or unfermented grape juice. Had Paul said "Drink no wine at all" without qualifications, he would have excluded even the drinking of

wholesome, nourishing grape juice.

2. The Relative Clause

The Antecedent of the Relative Pronoun. Paul's admonition "Do not get drunk with wine" is followed by a warning which in the RSV is rendered "for that is debauchery." The question to be considered now is, What is debauchery? Is it wine as the causative agent of debauchery or drunkenness as a state of debauchery?

The answer depends on which of the two is taken to be the antecedent of the relative clause *"en ho* --in which." A literal translation of the Greek text would read: "And do not get drunk with wine, in which [*en ho*] is debauchery [*asotia* —literally, 'unsavableness']." The RSV rendering of " *en ho* —in which" with "for that" makes the condition of being drunk with wine, rather than wine itself, the subject of "debauchery." This construction of the sentence, as Leon Field points out, "is expressly founded on the assumption that the use of wine is elsewhere allowed in the New Testament, and not on any exegetical necessities in the text itself."

From a grammatical viewpoint, the subject of "in which" can be either the previous word "wine" or the drunkenness spoken of in the preceding clause. This fact is recognized by such commentators as R. C. H. Lenski, who says: "'In which' refers to the condition of being drunk with wine or to ' *wine* ' *as here used, a means for becoming drunk* ." Robert Young, the author of the *Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, renders the relative clause "in which" accurately in his Bible translation: "And be not drunk with wine, *in which* is dissoluteness, but be filled in the Spirit."

Preference for "Wine." Historically, numerous translators and commentators have seen "wine" rather than the state of drunkenness as the antecedent of "in which." The reason is suggested by the position of *oino* ("with wine"), which in Greek comes immediately after the verb "drunk" and before the relative "in which." Though the immediate juxtaposition of "wine" between the verb and the relative is not absolutely determinative, it strongly suggests that the warning of the relative clause is about wine as the active cause of dissoluteness rather than drunkenness as a state of dissoluteness.

Support for this view is provided also by the fact that the words "Do not get drunk with wine," as *The Interpreter's Bible* commentary points out, "are cited from Prov. 23:31 (the LXX according to Codex A)."28 If Paul is quoting Proverbs 23:31 as found in the LXX, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, then we have reason to believe that Paul is warning against wine as such, since the text in Proverbs condemns the use of intoxicating wine ("Do not look at wine when it is red"), rather than its abuse.

Ancient Translations. This understanding of Ephesians 5:18 as a condemnation of intoxicating wine itself is supported by numerous ancient and modern translations. Tertullian (about A. D. 160-225), who is regarded as the father of Latin Christianity, renders the text as follows: "*et nolite inebriari vino* , *in quo est luxuria*" ("And be not inebriated with wine, in which is voluptuousness"). The connection between *vino* "with wine" and *quo* "which" is unmistakable in this Latin translation, because the relative *quo* has the same neuter gender of *vino* , upon which it depends.

Besides his translation, Tertullian reveals his understanding of the text as a prohibition against wine drinking in his usage of the text in his treatise *Against Marcion* , where he says: "'Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess,'—a precept which is suggested by the passage of the prophet, where the seducers of the consecrated [Nazirites] to drunkenness are rebuked: 'Ye gave wine to my holy ones to drink' [Amos 2:12]. This prohibition from drink was given also to the high priest Aaron and his sons."

About two centuries after Tertullian, Jerome translated Ephesians 5:18 in exactly the same way in his famous Latin translation of the Bible, known as the Vulgate (about A. D. 400). The Vulgate has served through the centuries as the official Latin Bible of the Roman Catholic Church.

Jerome's understanding of this text as an admonition to abstain from the use of wine is indicated also by his usage of the text. In a letter to Laeta, a lady who wrote to him asking how she should bring up her infant daughter, Jerome says: "Let her learn even now not to drink wine 'wherein is excess'" (Eph 5:18). In another letter to Eustochium, Jerome relates the story of a noble Roman lady,

Paula, who on her visit to the Holy Land "called to mind the cave in which Lot found refuge, and with tears in her eyes warned the virgins her companions to beware of 'wine wherein is excess' [Eph 5:18]; for it was to this that the Moabites and Ammonites owe their origin." Jerome's understanding of Ephesians 5:18 is significant since he is regarded as the most famous early Christian translator of the Bible.

Modern Translations. Several classical and modern translations have followed the Vulgate in its faithful literalness. For example, the French Synodal Version reads: "Ne vous enivrez pas de vin: car le vin porte à la dissolution" ("Do not inebriate yourselves with wine, for wine leads to dissoluteness").

To remove any possibility for misunderstanding, the translators have repeated the word "wine" in the relative clause. Other French translations, such as the David Martin and the Version d'Ostervald also establish a clear connection between wine and the relative clause. Both read: "Ne vous enivrez point de vin, dans lequel il y a de la dissolution" ("Do not inebriate yourselves with wine, in which there is dissolution").

In English one could argue that the antecedent of "in which" is the drunkenness spoken of in the preceding clause. This uncertainty is caused by the fact that in the English language the relative pronoun "which" has no gender, and consequently can be connected to any antecedent. In French, however, "lequel" ("in which") is masculine and thus can only refer to "vin" ("wine") which is also masculine. The connection between the two is unmistakable in these French translations.

The same clear connection between "wine" and "dissoluteness" is found in the two Spanish versions, Cipriano de Valera (A. D. 1900) and Nácar, Colunga, where the relative clause reads respectively: "en el cual hay disolucion" ("in which is dissoluteness") and "en el cual está el desenfreno" ("in which is excess"). In both instances the relative "cual" ("which") is preceded by the masculine article "el," because it refers to the masculine noun "vino" ("wine"). The connection is even clearer in the Spanish Catholic Version which reads "vino fomento da la injuria" ("wine which causes harm"). A similar rendering is found in the margin of the New American Standard Bible which reads: "wine, in which is dissipation."

The Good News German Bible ("Die Gute Nachricht") provides another clear example where wine is the subject of the relative clause:

"Betrinkt euch nicht; denn der Wein macht haltlos" ("Do not get drunk; because wine makes one unsteady or unprincipled"). The Italian Protestant version Riveduta by Giovanni Luzzi, as well as the Catholic Version produced by the Pontifical Biblical Institute, follow the sentence construction of the French and Spanish versions cited above. The Riveduta reads: "E non v'inebriate di vino; esso porta alla dissolutezza" ("And do not inebriate yourselves with wine; it [wine] leads to dissoluteness"). The antecedent of "esso" ("it") is unmistakably "vino," because it is of the same masculine gender as "vino," since it depends upon it.

The sampling of ancient and modern translations cited above should suffice to show that historically many translators have understood the relative clause of Ephesians 5:18 as representing a condemnation not of drunkenness but of wine itself. If these translators are correct, as I believe they are for the reasons mentioned above, then Ephesians 5:18 provides a powerful indictment against the actual use of intoxicating wine and not merely against its abuse. A look at the noun *asotia* , rendered by the RSV as "debauchery," will help us appreciate the nature of the condemnation.

3. The Meaning of *Asotia*

Moral Dissoluteness . The noun *asotia* occurs in two other places in the New Testament, namely, in Titus 1:6 and in 1 Peter 4:4, and in both places it is rendered as "profligacy" in the RSV. The word is compounded of the negative *a* and a noun from the verb *sozein*, to save. Literally it signifies the absence of salvation—a state of hopeless moral dissoluteness. Albert Barnes explains that *asotia* denotes that "which is unsafe, not to be recovered, lost beyond recovery; then that which is abandoned to sensuality and lust; dissoluteness, debauchery, revelry. The meaning here [Eph 5:18] is that all this follows the use of wine."

The possible connection between wine as the causing agent of "drunkenness" and *asotia*, the condition of moral dissoluteness, suggests that the passage views not only the abuse but also the use of wine as intrinsically evil. Leon C. Field expresses this view, noting that "it would be difficult to indicate any other arrangement of the words of this passage which would so clearly and forcibly express the idea that insalvableness *inheres* in wine as its essential characteristic."

Alcohol Affects the Mind. The reason that the use of intoxicating beverages can easily place a person in a state of *asotia*, that is, of moral corruption inimical to the reception of saving truth, is that alcohol deranges the functions of the mind, which is the channel through which the Holy Spirit works. This is why Paul urges Christians to be filled not with wine but with the Holy Spirit.

"Let Christians," counsels Albert Barnes, "when about to indulge in a glass of wine, think of this admonition [Eph 5:18]. Let them remember that their bodies should be the temple of the Holy Ghost rather than a receptacle for intoxicating drinks. Was any man ever made a better Christian by the use of wine? Was any minister ever better fitted to counsel an anxious sinner, or to pray, or to preach the gospel, by the use of intoxicating drinks? Let the history of wine-drinking and intemperate clergymen answer."

4. Rabbinical Testimonies

Condemnation of Wine. Rabbinical literature provides several examples to support and illustrate our interpretation of Ephesians 5:18 as a condemnation not only of the abuse but also of the use of intoxicating wine. We shall cite several examples in order to dispel the mistaken notion that the Jews, like the Bible writers, saw nothing intrinsically evil in the moderate use of wine. This popular notion has greatly influenced the interpretation of those Biblical teachings dealing with alcoholic beverages.

In their commentary on the New Testament based on rabbinic comments, Strack and Billerbeck give numerous rabbinical statements under Ephesians 5:18. They introduce such statements, by noting: "In rabbinical writings there are numerous warnings against wine." For our purpose we shall quote the following statements cited by these authors:

"Wine separates man from the way of life and leads him in the pathway of death, because wine leads to idolatry. . . . Thus we learn that wherever [Scripture] speaks of wine, there you find also dissoluteness . . . For this Isaiah said: 'The strength of the law is in salvation, but the strength of wine is in sorrow. Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine' (Is 5:22). For this we read: 'Who has a woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? . . . Those who tarry long over wine' (Prov 23:29-30). When wine enters the body, out goes sense; where ever there is wine there is no understanding."

Similar rabbinic warnings against wine are found in the compilation of Talmudic statements on wine by Rabbi Isidore Koplowitz. Here are some: "Whenever wine enters a person, his mind becomes confused." "Rabbi Isaac said, 'The evil spirit entices a person only while he is eating and drinking, and when one becomes merry by wine, then the evil spirit has the mastery over him. . . . The drinking of wine causes the evil inclinations to be awakened within a person, as it is written, 'And they made their father [Lot] drink wine that night etc.' (Gen. 19:33)."

Permanent Prohibition. Another statement attributed to Rabbi Eliezer makes the prohibition against drinking wine a permanent law for all times: "Therefore, the Holy One, blessed be He, commanded Aaron, 'Do not drink wine nor strong drink.' Do not assume that this injunction against wine and strong drink was only for the past, namely as long as the holy Temple at Jerusalem was still in existence, as it is written, 'When ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation,' but you have to guard against wine for all times to come, for wine is an omen of curse."

An extreme example of how evil intoxicating beverages were in the mind of some Jews is the rabbinic statement that "Samuel did not pray in a house that contained intoxicating drinks (Talmud Babli Erubin 65a)."

Conclusion. The foregoing analysis of Ephesians 5:18 has shown that this text provides *no Biblical sanction for moderate use of alcoholic beverages.* On the contrary, the structure of the passage as well as the possible connection between "wine" and the relative clause, a connection recognized by numerous ancient and modern translations, makes this text *a most powerful Biblical indictment of intoxicating wine.*

The intent of Paul in this passage is to show the irreconcilable contrast that exists between the spirit of fermented wine and the Holy Spirit. In the life of a believer the two are mutually exclusive. Summing up, the thought of Ephesians 5:18-19 can be paraphrased as follows: "Do not get drunk with wine, because the use of wine places a person in a state of *asotia* , that is, of moral corruption inimical to the reception of saving truth. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Find enjoyment not in the stimulation of wine but in the inspiration of the Spirit who causes you to sing and make music in your heart to the Lord."

Abstinence in Acts 24:25. The New Testament writers retain the idea of abstinence in their use of *enkrateia* . The first occurrence of the word is in Acts 24:25 as one of the topics presented by Paul to Felix and Drusilla: "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance [*enkrateias*], and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (KJV). Felix was an unjust governor, addicted to licentious indulgence and living in adultery with Drusilla. In view of the notorious cruelty and licentiousness of the guilty pair, it is evident that when Paul spoke to them of *enkrateia* , his theme was not moderation but abstinence from all unlawful and sinful practices.

Wycliffe correctly renders *enkrateia* in this text by "chastitie." This meaning is most evident in 1 Corinthians 7:9 where Paul uses the verbal form to describe the same virtue of chastity: "But if they cannot exercise self-control [*enkrateuomai*] they should marry."

Abstinence in 1 Corinthians 9:25. In the same epistle Paul uses the verb a second time in a way which clearly includes the idea of abstinence: "Every athlete exercises self-control in all things [*panta enkrateuetai*]. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable" (1 Cor 9:25, RSV). The KJV renders the verb in question "is temperate in all things."

Some appeal to this passage to defend the moderate use of alcoholic beverages. They believe that in this passage the apostle teaches Christians to be temperate, that is, moderate, in the use of all things including alcoholic beverages. This represents a misinterpretation of the text which has been influenced by inaccurate modern translations.

The older translations recognize that the true meaning of the verb in this passage is abstinence, not moderation. The Latin Vulgate renders it " *ab omnibus se abstinet* " ("he abstains himself from all things"). Wycliffe has the same rendering, "absteyneth hym fro alle thingis." Tyndale, Cranmer and the Geneva version follow the same translation.

This meaning is supported by the allusion to the training of athletes for the ancient games. Commentators give abundant illustrative references from ancient authors. Adam Clarke, for example, quotes the stoic philosopher Epictetus (about A.D. 100) who wrote:

"Do you wish to gain the prize at the Olympic games? Consider the requisite preparations and the consequences: You must observe a strict regimen; must live on food which you dislike; you must abstain from all delicacies; must exercise yourself at the necessary and prescribed times both in heat and cold; you must drink nothing cooling; *take no wine as formerly*."

In his *De Arte Poetica* Horace has the famous lines which Francis translates as follows: "The youth who hopes the Olympic price to gain, All arts must try, and every toil sustain; The extremes of heat and cold must often prove; And shun the weakening joys of wine and love [*Abstinuit Venere et Bacco* —literally, "he abstains from love and wine"]."

In light of what we know about the rigorous abstinent life-style of ancient athletes, Paul's phrase *panta enkrateuetai* can be rendered correctly as "he abstains from all [harmful] things." This meaning is recognized by several commentators. Walter Grundmann explains that the verb under discussion in 1 Corinthians 9:25 "simply tells us that for the sake of the goal toward which he strives . . . he [the athlete] *refrains* from all the things which might offend or hamper." Similarly F. W. Grosheide comments that the meaning of the verb is "[he] trains himself by doing or *taking nothing* that would harm."

In the very next verses Paul illustrates this meaning by making a personal application. Continuing with the image of the athlete, he says, "Well, I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified" (1 Cor 9:26-27). Such language scarcely supports the moderation view of temperance as a prudent use of intoxicating beverages. It rather implies a stern, self-denying discipline. It implies that to qualify for acceptance as citizens of heaven, we must subdue our craving for intoxicating substances by the power of divine grace (Phil 4:13).

Abstinence in other Passages. The idea of abstinence is also present in the other passages in which *enkrateia* occurs. We shall make only a brief reference to them. In Galatians 5:22 this word stands as the completion and crown of the fruit of the Spirit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control [*enkrateia*]; against such there is no law." The fruit of the Spirit, including the last named, stands in opposition to the "works of the flesh" enumerated in the preceding verse and among which "drunkenness" is prominent. This suggests that *enkrateia* is seen by Paul especially as the antithesis of drunkenness.

In 2 Peter 1:6 *enkrateia* occurs among the list of virtues, sometimes called "Peter's ladder," and is rendered "self-control" in the RSV. The Vulgate renders it *abstinentia*, and Wycliffe "absteynence." The adjective form *enkrate* occurs once in Titus 1:8 where it corresponds to *nephalion* ("abstinent") in 1 Timothy 3:2.

From this survey it is clear that the admonitions to sobriety and temperance in the New Testament call for a moderate use of all good things and total abstinence from all that is injurious. Applied to alcoholic beverages, the New Testament teaches total abstinence. Our study of the apostolic exhortations to sobriety expressed through the terms *sophron, nepho, nephalios,* and *enkrateia* has shown that these terms complement one another in emphasizing the Christian calling to mental vigilance and physical abstinence…

CONCLUSION

The conclusion emerging from the investigation conducted in this chapter into the apostolic teachings regarding alcoholic beverages is abundantly clear. Contrary to the prevailing perception, the New Testament is amazingly consistent in its teaching of abstinence from the use of alcoholic beverages.

We have found that the texts commonly used to support the moderationist view provide no support to such a view. On the contrary, some of them openly contradict the moderationist view.

The irony of the charge in Acts 2:13 that the apostles were drunk on *gleukos*, that is, grape juice, their common beverage, provides an indirect but important proof of their abstinent life-style and inferentially of the life-style of their Master.

Paul's reference to "drunkenness" at the Communion table of the Corinthian church (1 Cor 11:21) offers no support for a moderate use of alcoholic wine, because whatever was done at Corinth was a departure from the instructions Paul had delivered to the church. Thus, their conduct constitutes a warning rather than an example for us. Furthermore, our study of the meaning of the verb *methuo* ("satiated") and of the implications of Paul's admonitions suggests quite clearly that the problem at Corinth was indulgence in eating

rather than intoxication with alcoholic wine.

The intent of Paul's admonition in Ephesians 5:18 ("Do not get drunk with wine") is not to sanction the moderate use of wine, but to show the irreconcilable contrast between the spirit of wine and presence of the Holy Spirit. The structure of the passage, as well as the possible connection between "wine" and the relative clause—recognized by many ancient and modern translations—makes this text one of the most powerful Biblical indictments against intoxicating wine.

The apostolic admonitions to sobriety and temperance call for a moderate use of all good things and total abstinence from all that is harmful. Our study of the Greek terms (*sophron, nepho, nephalios,* and *enkrateia*) used in the apostolic admonitions has shown how these terms complement one another in emphasizing the Christian need for both mental vigilance and physical abstinence from intoxicating substances such as alcoholic beverages.

The fundamental reason given by Peter and Paul for their call to a life of vigilance and abstinence is eschatological, namely, preparation to live in the holy presence of Christ at His soon coming." (This above section on was written by Dr. Samuel Bacchiocchi and can be found in its entirety with references on his web site *WINE IN THE BIBLE: A BIBLICAL STUDY ON THE USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES*.)

The Bible says, "Wine is a mocker [obviously fermented here], Strong drink is a brawler [causes violence], and whoever is led astray by it is not wise." (Proverbs 20:1) A 1987 Gallup Poll indicates that 1 in 4 families are troubled by alcohol. This means that more than 61[+] million Americans are affected by some alcohol-related problems such as retarded children (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome), divorce, and violence in the home, crime, sickness and death.

Now, I would like to cover a few more often asked questions on our web site Bible-Christian.org:

What does this verse mean? Proverbs 31: 7 says, "Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." "At first this advice seems to contradict such prohibitions as in Proverbs 23:31. However, it is obvious in context that the advice is given in irony to those who have drifted so far from God as to be 'appointed to destruction' [die, or Lit. "sons of passing away" NKJV] anyway, Proverbs 31:8." (Dr. Henry M. Morris Defender's Bible)

Didn't God have the Old Testament priests offer fermented wine to the Lord on the sacrifices* ? *"All the best of the oil, all the best of the new wine and the grain, their first fruits which they offer to the Lord, I have given them to you. 13 Whatever first ripe fruit is in their land, which they bring to the Lord, shall be yours." (Numbers 18:12,13)

"In this passage, all the best of the wine [tirosh, grape juice] is associated with the best of the oil and of the wheat, denoting the most valuable natural productions—the direct gift of God.

"…It is hardly to be credited [that this was fermented wine], when in the law (Leviticus 2:11) all leaven was forbidden as an offering, that God should require a fermented liquor which, of all others, is the most direct cause of wretchedness and woe in this life, and of eternal ruin in the future, as a religious offering [is unthinkable].

"Leaven was forbidden with all sacrifices, whether they were meat or peace offerings Ex. 23:18; 34:25; Lev. 6:17: 7:12; 10:12. As all the other articles offered in worship were in their nature pure and harmless—were essential to the comfort and wellbeing of man, it is [impossible] that the [alcoholic] wine should be the one exception.

When the patriarch Isaac blessed his son Jacob he said, "Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine." (tirosh, grape juice) (Genesis 27:28) The blessing was on the actual growth of the field—that which 'the dew and fatness of the earth produced,' these were the direct gifts of God." (*Bible Wines* William Patton)

The above information would make it impossible for Jesus to have offered up at His Last Supper a fermented drink as the First Communion. Offering up alcohol to His Heavenly Father would have been a sacrilege of the worst kind!

1. Is the "Fruit of the Vine" Alcoholic Wine?

"Fruit of the Vine." After offering the cup to His disciples as the symbol of His blood of the new covenant, Jesus said: "I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt 26:29; cf. Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18). Moderationists maintain that the phrase "fruit of the vine" is a figurative expression which was used as "a functional equivalent for [fermented] 'wine.'" Consequently the cup Jesus offered to the disciples contained alcoholic wine.

It is true that the phrase "fruit of the vine" was *sometimes* used as equivalent to *oinos* (wine), but that does not mean that the wine used at the Last Supper must have been fermented. We have shown in Chapter 2 that *oinos,* like the Hebrew *yayin,* was a generic term for the expressed juice of the grape, whether fermented or unfermented.

The Greek translation of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint, uses *oinos* to translate *yayin* and *tirosh* in such passages as Jeremiah 40:10-11 and Judges 9:13, where the idea of fermentation *is excluded…*

Mosaic law regarding "unfermented things" (Ex 13:7) are indicative of different religious traditions among the Jews. The Orthodox Jews, who are conservative, use mostly unfermented wine, while the Reformed Jews, who are liberal, use mostly fermented wine…

Obedience to the Mosaic Law. Jesus used unfermented grape juice at the Last Supper because He understood and observed the Mosaic law requiring the absence of all fermented articles during the Passover feast. The law forbade the use and presence in the house o*f seor* (Ex 12:15), which means leaven, yeast or whatever can produce fermentation. As Leon C. Field explains, "It means literally 'the sourer,' and is applicable to any matter capable of producing fermentation—to all yeastly or decaying albuminous substances—and so may be translated 'ferment.'"

Whatever had been subject to the action of *seor* —that is fermentation, was also forbidden. This was called *hametz* and is translated "leavened bread" in the KJV (Ex 12:15; 13:7). The word "bread," however, is not in the text; thus a more accurate translation is

"fermented thing." For seven days the Jews were to partake of *matzoth*, usually translated "unleavened bread" (Ex 13:6-7). As in the case of *hametz*, the word "bread" is not in the text, thus, a more accurate translation is "unfermented things."

This translation is confirmed by Robert Young, author of *Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible.* In his *Young's Literal Translation of the Bible,* Young renders Exodus 12:14, 19 as follows: ". . . for anyone eating anything fermented from the first day till the seventh day, even that person hath been cut off from Israel. . . . anything fermented ye do not eat, in all your dwellings ye do not eat leavened things."

Thus the entire passage of Exodus 13:6-7 may with literal accuracy be rendered: "Seven days you shall eat of unfermented things, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the Lord. Unfermented things shall be eaten for seven days; no fermented thing shall be seen with you in all your territory."

Compliance with the Mosaic law would require the exclusion of fermented wine. The rabbis debated this question at great length and, as we have seen, some circumvented the law by arguing that the juice of fruits, such as wine, do not ferment. There is no reason to believe that Jesus, who had come to fulfill the law (Matt 5:17), would violate the Passover law against the use of "fermented things," especially since He recognized and affirmed the moral symbolism of fermentation when He warned His disciples to "beware of the leaven of the Phariseesand Sadducees" (Matt 16:6). "Leaven" for Christ represented corrupt nature and teachings, as the disciples later understood (Matt 16:12).

Paul gives to "leaven" the same symbolic meaning when he admonishes the Corinthians to "cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us, therefore, celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor 5:7-8).

The exclusion of fermented things during the Passover feast was *not* merely to remind the Israelites of the haste with which they left Egypt (Deut 16:3), having no time to put leaven in their dough. This is evident from Exodus 12:8, 39 where the command to eat unleavened bread was given before the departure from Egypt, when there was plenty of time for the dough to rise.

The primary purpose of the law against leaven is found in the symbolic meaning Scripture attaches to leaven which, as we have seen, is sin and corruption. Ellen White brings out this purpose of the law, saying: "Among the Jews, leaven was sometimes used as an emblem of sin.

At the time of the Passover the people were directed to remove all the leaven from their houses, as they were to put away sin from their hearts."If ferment, the symbol of corruption and insincerity, was out of place at the Jewish Passover, how much more unsuitable it should be at the Christian Lord's Supper!

The symbolic, moral significance attached to leaven is further indicated by its exclusion from the cereal offering (Lev 2:11), the sin offering (Lev 6:17), the consecration offering (Ex 29:2), the Nazarite offering (Num 6:15) and the showbread (Lev 24:5-9). But salt, because it represents preservation from corruption, was required with sacrifices: "With all your offerings you shall offer salt" (Lev 2:13). If leaven was not allowed with the sacrifices, which were a type of Christ's atoning blood, how much more out of place would been fermented wine to represent His atoning blood!

Jesus understood the meaning of the letter and spirit of the Mosaic law regarding "unfermented things," as indicated by His teaching (Matt 16:6, 12). This gives us reason to believe that the cup He "blessed" and gave to His disciples did not contain any "fermented thing" prohibited by Scripture. We cannot imagine that our Lord disregarded a Biblical command by choosing fermented wine to perpetuate the memory of His sacrifice, of which all the other sacrifices were but types.

Consistency of Symbol . A second reason for believing that Jesus used unfermented wine at the Last Supper is the consistency and beauty of the blood symbolism which cannot be fittingly represented by fermented wine. Leaven, we have seen, was used by Christ to represent the corrupt teachings of the Pharisees and is viewed in Scripture as an emblem of sin and corruption.

Could Christ have offered His disciples a cup of fermented wine to symbolize His untainted blood shed for the remission of our sins? Could the redeeming and cleansing blood of Christ have been represented aptly by an intoxicating cup which stands in the Scripture for human depravity and divine indignation?

We cannot conceive that Christ bent over to bless in grateful prayer a cup containing alcoholic wine which the Scripture warns us not to look at (Prov 23:31). A cup that intoxicates is a cup of cursing and not "the cup of blessing" (1 Cor 10:16); it is "the cup of demons" and not "the cup of the Lord" (1 Cor 10:21).

Up to that moment the redeeming blood of Christ had been represented by the blood of goats and bulls (Heb 9:13-14); henceforth the new emblem was to be the wine of the Lord's Supper. The blood of Christ was free from defilement and corruption. There was no taint of sin in His veins. "He whom God raised up saw no corruption" (Acts 13:37) either in life or in death. To symbolize the purity of His blood (life) poured out for the remission of sin, Jesus took a cup and over its content, declared: "This is *my* blood" (Matt 26:28). The content of the cup could hardly have been fermented wine, because the latter cannot properly symbolize the incorruptible and precious blood of Christ" (1 Pet 1:18-19).

Fermented wine is an appropriate emblem for decay and death, for fermentation destroys most of the nutrients found in grape juice. On the other hand, unfermented grape juice, on account of its innocent and nutritious properties, is a proper symbol of the blessings of salvation and immortal life bestowed upon us through the blood of Christ.

His blood is said to purify our "conscience from dead works" (Heb 9:14), but fermented wine weakens our moral inhibitions and awakens our baser passions, thus causing the defilement of our consciences. Can such a product properly represent the cleansing power of Christ's redeeming blood? Hardly so. It is more fitted to represent moral disease and guilt than pardon and purification.

The value of a symbol is determined by its capacity to help us conceptualize and experience the spiritual reality it represents. Grape juice untouched by fermentation supplies life-sustaining nutrients to our bodies, thus it has the capacity for helping us to conceptualize and to experience the assurance of salvation represented by Christ's blood.

Ellen White aptly says: "The Passover wine, untouched by fermentation, is on the table. These emblems Christ employs to represent His own unblemished sacrifice. Nothing corrupted by fermentation, the symbol of sin and death, could represent the 'Lamb without blemish and without spot'" (1 Pet 1:19).

The Language of the Last Supper. A third reason for believing that Jesus used unfermented wine at the Last Supper is suggested by the language in which its institution is recorded. The words have been preserved with singular uniformity in the synoptic Gospels and almost in the same form in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. We will briefly consider three phrases of the narrative.

After blessing and breaking the bread Jesus "*took a cup*" (Matt 26:27; Mark 14:23; cf. Luke 22:17; 1 Cor 11:25). Most authorities suggest that the reference is to the third of the four cups of the Passover meal, called the "cup of benediction" (*Cos ha-Berachah*). This cup by which the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was instituted retained its name as "the cup of blessing" (1 Cor 10:16).

Evidently the name was derived from the blessing Christ pronounced over its contents. Such could never be the intoxicating wine of which God clearly disapproves in the Scripture. As mentioned earlier, we cannot imagine Christ bending over prayerfully to bless a cup containing intoxicating wine. The supposition is sacrilegious. Such a cup would be a cup of cursing rather than a cup of blessing, "the cup of demons" rather than "the cup of the Lord" (1 Cor 10:21).

After blessing the cup, Jesus gave it to His disciples and said: "*Drink of it, all of you*" (Matt 26:27, cf. Mark 14:23; Luke 22:17). Christ's invitation to drink the memorial cup of His blood is extended to "*all*" without exception. There is no reason that anyone should refuse the cup, if its content is unfermented, nutritious grape juice. But if its content is fermented, intoxicating wine, many of Christ's faithful followers cannot and should not partake of it…

To imagine that Christ would sanction such ill-effects by personally offering a sizeable cup of alcoholic wine to His disciples, is tantamount to destroying the moral integrity of His character. Believers who truly accepts Christ as their sinless Savior instinctively recoil from such a thought.

Christ commands "all" of His followers to drink the cup. If the content of the cup were alcoholic wine, not all Christians could drink. There are some to whom alcohol in any form is very harmful. Young children participate at the Lord's table should certainly not touch wine.

There are those to whom the simple taste or smell of alcohol awakens in them a dormant or conquered craving for alcohol. Could Christ, who taught us to pray "Lead us not into temptation," have made His memorial table a place of irresistible temptation for some and of danger for all?...

Another significant element of the language of the Last Supper is the phrase "*fruit of the vine*," used by Jesus to describe the content of the cup. We noticed earlier that this designation best applies to natural, unfermented juice. Fermented wine is not the natural "fruit" of the vine but is the result of disintegrating forces. Thus, the very designation used by Christ, "fruit of the vine" supports the unfermented nature of the wine used at the Last Supper.

The Survival of the Practice . A fourth reason for believing that Jesus used unfermented wine at the Last Supper is the survival of such a practice among certain Christian groups or churches. A significant example is the apocryphal *Acts and Martyrdom of St. Matthew the Apostle*, which circulated in the third century.

A heavenly voice instructs the local Bishop Plato, saying: "Read the Gospel and bring as an offering the holy bread; and having pressed three clusters from the vine into a cup, communicate with me, as the Lord Jesus showed us how to offer up when He rose from the dead on the third day." This is a clear testimony of the use of freshly pressed grape juice in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Another indication is provided by the view expressed by Irenaeus (A.D. 130-200), Bishop of Lyons, that the communion bread and wine are the first fruits offered to God: "Giving directions to His disciples to offer to God the first-fruits of His own created things . . . He [Christ] took that created thing, bread, and gave thanks, and said, 'This is My body.' And the cup likewise, which is part of that creation to which we belong, He confessed to be His blood."…

[T]he Nestorian Church of Western Asia, the Christians of St. Thomas in India, the Coptic monasteries in Egypt, and the Christians of St. John in Persia, all of which celebrated the Lord's Supper with unfermented wine made either with fresh or dried grapes. The reader is referred to these authors for documentation and information about these oriental churches.

Our inquiry into several aspects of the communion wine, such as the Jewish Passover wine, the language of the Last Supper, the Passover law of fermentation, the consistency of the symbol, and the survival of the use of unfermented grape juice at the Lord's Supper, has shown that all of these indicate our Lord used and commanded the use of unfermented, nutritious grape juice to perpetuate the memory of His blood shed for the remission of our sins.

Here is a comment we received from a person who strongly believes that the Bible is teaching us it is alright to drink as long as we don't get drunk: **"If I may digress, I would like to add that being a drunkard is obviously a bad thing. So is being a glutton. However, we are not told to stop eating; we are just told to not be gluttons. We are not told to not drink wine, we are told to not be drunkards."**

This is an interesting statement, and kind of sums up what many Christians are teaching these days, as compared with the Bible and teaching of godly Christians in days gone by. That is, they believe as long as you don't get drunk, it is ok to drink. This could not be further from the truth, and I encourage you to read another article I have written on this very thing. It is called "Is it alright for Christians to drink alcohol?" It addresses this very issue.

Let me just say that you are putting an assumption in with a fact. The assumption is that the word 'wine' in the Bible is always alcoholic. So if you read this into your statement. The statement itself is flawed. It is like asking the question, When did you stop beating your wife? Since the word 'wine' in the Bible is not always alcoholic, then it would be alright to drink some wine (grape juice) in moderation, even as Paul told Timothy to do. Also, we are not told that we will go to hell if we tell one lie, but we are told

that those who practice lying will not go to heaven. Does that mean it is ok to tell some lies? No, and the same is true of drinking alcohol.

The Bible does not say if you drink one drink of alcohol you are not going to heaven. It does say that if a person is practicing drinking or a drunkard they will not go to heaven. That is, of course, if they don't get right with the Lord. Jesus can save us no matter what, if we ask Him to save us! Knowing this, should we get a close to the fire as possible? Or should we get as far away from the fire as possible?

I know that what I am teaching flies in the face of what many of the churches teach. But my question to you is, "Are you willing to check it out for yourself, or are you going to assume that the churches are always right?" You might be interested to know that these same churches did not always teach that it was alright to drink alcohol in moderation.

Look at their historical doctrines, and you might be surprised at what you find, probably even in your own church. And look at how much heartache it has caused in Christian homes, since they did start teaching it was ok to drink in "moderation."

I believe this is the reason that even some translations of the Bible have been translated the way they were in some references to alcohol, and that is because of the prevailing views of alcohol in the society when a translation is made.

Reading in the Greek and Hebrew you see a view of fermented or "strong drink" as harmful, not helpful, with the exception of using it to pour on a wound. (Luke 10:34) or using it for a dying person to kill the pain (Proverbs 31: 6). Even as they offered it to Jesus on the cross, but when He had tasted it he would not drink it, Matthew 27:34.

Also Proverbs 31: 7 says, "Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." "At first this advice seems to contradict such prohibitions as in Proverbs 23:31. However, it is obvious in context that the advice is given in irony to those who have drifted so far from God as to be 'appointed to destruction' [die, or Lit. "sons of passing away" NKJV] anyway, Proverbs 31:8." (Dr. Henry M. Morris Defender's Bible)

Some people think that all believers drank alcohol in the Bible so they bring up passages like this one in 1 Samuel. Here it talks about when Hannah was at the tabernacle praying for a baby, "And it happened, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli watched her mouth. Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard.

"Therefore Eli thought she was drunk. So Eli said to her, 'How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you!' But Hannah answered and said, 'No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit.

"I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. Do not consider your maidservant a wicked woman, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief I have spoken until now.'" (1 Samuel 1:12-16) She was not drinking a fermented drink or getting drunk, because she did not want to be considered "a wicked woman."

Is Paul endorsing the consumption of alcoholic beverages when he instructs Timothy to drink wine for his stomach's sake in I Timothy 5:23?

We do get a little insight into how the early apostles lived by looking at I Timothy 5:23. Here Paul tells Timothy, "No longer drink only water, but use a little wine (grape juice) for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities."

They seem to be so afraid that if they drank any grape juice it might be fermented, that they would not even try it. At least this is the experience of Timothy. Paul was suggesting that a little grape juice would be good for Timothy's stomach. (My doctor tells me that the dark Concord grape juice is good also for your heart. He suggests a couple glasses a day.)

The disciples of Jesus went on the verses from the Old Testament like Proverbs 23:31-32 that warn us "Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper."

Another good question is about references like: 1 Timothy 3:2, 3; Titus 1:7; 1 Timothy 3:8 and Titus 2:3.

The New International Version translates 1 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7 here as, "not given to drunkenness". This translation does not make any sense at all, in light of Proverbs 23:31-32, and the rest of the injunctions against any drinking of alcohol by Paul and the other Apostles. **(So be very careful which versions of the Bible you study! The best version by far, in this area of alcohol, is the New King James Version**.)

Many, if not most, of your older commentaries would contradict this phrase from the Greek being translated as "not given to drunkenness" as the NIV translates it. This translation is contrary to almost all historical references and commentaries on this phrase. Here is what a very respected commentary *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* states about this passage:

" **2. Blameless.** Irreproachable; the same Greek word is used in 5:7 and 6:14. **Vigilant. ASV**, temperate. Originally meant '*temperate* in use of wine,' but here it is to be taken figuratively, since the next verse forbids intemperance." As seen earlier in the article 'temperance' is taught all through the New Testament so why would an elder of church be allowed to be intemperate?

This just shows the bias of the New International Version for the use of alcohol, and is a reflection of the times we are living in. Many Christians today want to believe that it is alright to drink alcohol, and that against the plain teaching of the Word of God, and historical evidence! (Look at our article *Is it alright for Christians to drink Alcohol?)*

Paul has said in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 that if a person is a drunkard they are not even going to heaven. How could a person who is, as the NIV states it, 'not given to drunkenness' be a good example of a believer? How many times could he get drunk before he would be considered unqualified or unfit for the office of bishop?

Jesus Himself says that if we even start to drink with drunkards we are not going to heaven: "Blessed is that servant whom his

master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servants says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him* and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 24:46-51

In references such as 1 Timothy 3:2-3 and Titus 1:7, we have the phrase, "not given to wine" this is taken by some to mean, "not to be addicted" to alcohol. But in reality the Greek word used here is, "mee-paroinon", literally, not at, by near, or with wine (alcohol). According to Paul, total abstinence is an indispensable qualification for bishops (pastors)."

"'Not given to wine.' The Apostle Paul, in this first letter to Timothy, whom he calls his 'own son in the faith,' names thirteen qualifications for a bishop or pastor…The language is imperative [commands], 'must be' thus designating that these qualifications are indispensable. He [spoke] with authority, being inspired of God.

"It is not my purpose to examine to examine each of these thirteen [qualifications], but to call attention to three of them, as bearing particularly on the duty of abstinence. In the Authorized Version [KJV], we read, 'Vigilant, sober, not given to wine.' [in the New King James these three words are temperate, sober-minded, not given to wine.]

"…[W]e must look at the Greek words used by the apostle. *Vigilant* [temperate NKJV]—The Greek is *neephalion*, which Donnegan's *Lexicon* renders 'abstemious that abstains, *especially from wine*.' Hence, 'sober, discreet circumspect, cautious.'

"*Robinson's New Testament Lexicon* defines the word, 'Sober, temperate, *especially in respect to wine*.' …In the adjective form, the word occurs only 1 Tim. 3: 2, 11, and Tit. 2: 2, from the verb *neepho,* which Donnegan defines, 'To live abstemiously, to abstain from wine.' (See *Bible Wines* William Patton) *Green's New Testament Lexicon*, 'To be sober, not intoxicated; metaphorically, to be vigilant, circumspect.'

"Sober— The Greek is *sóphrona*. Donnegan, 'That is, of sound mind and good understanding; sound in intellect, not deranged; intelligent, discreet, prudent, or wise.' Green 'Sound; of a sound mind, sane, staid, temperate, discreet…Bloomfield, 'Sober-minded, orderly.'

"Not given to wine— The Greek is *mee-paroinon: mee*, a negative particle, *not; paroinon*, compounded of *para*, a preposition governing the genitive (of, from, on the part of), the dative (at, by, near, with), the accusative (together, with, to towards, by, near, at, next to); and *oinos*, wine. Literally, not at, by, near, or with wine. This looks considerably like *total abstinence*. It applies equally to private habits and public conduct.

"Notice the care steps of the progress. He must be *neephalion*, abstinent, sober in body, that he may be *sóphrona*, sound in mind, and that his influence may be unimpaired, mee-parion, not with or near wine. We find in this passage no [allowance] for the moderate use of intoxicating wine, but the reverse, the obligation to abstain totally…

"That both Paul and Timothy understood that total abstinence was an essential qualification for the Christian pastor, is evident from the compliance of Timothy. In this same letter, v. 23 Paul advises Timothy, 'Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy [your] stomach's sake and thine [your] often infirmities.'

"The fact is plain that Timothy, in strict accordance with the direction, 'not given to wine,' that is, not with or near wine, was a total abstainer. The recommendation to 'use a little wine' is exceptional, and strictly medicinal…"(See *Bible Wines* William Patton)

The second type of reference that has caused confusion to some, are the ones that talk about the conduct of deacons 1 Timothy 3:8 and Titus 2:3…"not given to much wine." (KJV, NKJV) In order to understand these verses we will need to understand a popular vice of that time. That was to drink a lot of unfermented wine. They used various methods to promote thirst. These drinkers might continue drinking all night at their feasts.

Excessive drinking, even of non-alcoholic drinks corresponded to gluttony—the excessive use of food. Paul is simply guarding the deacons against a vice of the day. It would be similar in our day to "bulimia" (eating or drinking to the point of being gorged and then vomiting). This is unbecoming behavior for a Christian in any age!

William Patton says about these verses: "1 Timothy 3:8, Deacons—"not given to much wine." This is held as evidence not only that they might use some wine, but also that the wine was intoxicating.

"The Greek word *proscko* occurs twenty-four times, and is eight times rendered beware; six times, take heed; four, gave heed; one, giving heed; two, gave attendance; one, attended; one, had regard; one, given to wine.

"Robinson's rendering is, 'to give or devote one's self to anything;' and other lexicons, 'be addicted to, engage in, be occupied with,' as in 1 Timothy 1:4; 3:8. The deacons of the primitive churches were converts mostly from idolatry, and in their unconverted state were accustomed to [gluttony] and sensuality.

"In the previous pages, we have seen that those who were dissipated and drinkers preferred [sometimes] the wine whose strength had been broken by the filter, because it enabled them to drink largely without becoming intoxicated.

"They used various methods to promote thirst. These …drinkers continued at times all night at their feasts. 'Excessive drinking, even of uninebriating drinks, was a vice prevalent in the days of St. Paul, and corresponded to gluttony, also common—the excessive use of food….'—Bible Commentary p. 368. Paul is simply guarding the deacons against a vice of the day.

"Such devotion to any kind of wine showed a [gluttony which would be unbecoming] in one holding office in the church of Christ. 'To argue that, forbidding much wine, Paul approves of the use of some wine [alcohol] and of any and every sort, is to adopt a mode of interpretation [and translation that is] dangerous and wholly inconsistent with common usage.'

"When applied to the clause, 'not greedy of filthy lucre,' it would sanction all avarice and trade craftiness short of that greed which is mean and reckless.' But Paul, and other inspired writers, make all covetousness to be idolatry, and not to be once named, much less practiced by the saints, even moderately.

"1 Timothy 3:11, 'Wives, be sober.' The same Greek word is in verse 2 rendered vigilant, and which Donnegan renders [it] abstemious, that abstains, especially from wine. The N.T. Greek lexicons define it, 'temperate, abstinent in respect to wine.'" (*Bible Wines* by William Patton)

In the Old in Proverbs 31:4-5 it says, "*It is* not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink; Lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted…" Then in Rev. 1:6 it says, "To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." "And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. 5:10)

We are told that we are kings and priests in the New Testament.

The Old Testament priests were warned not to drink any wine (alcohol) or intoxicating drink when they went into the tabernacle (or temple) Leviticus 10:8-10 This does not mean that they could drink an intoxicating drink at other times, just that this was a serious warning as to dire consequences if they did drink it before going into the tabernacle or temple. We are told we are priests in 1 Peter 2:5, 9-10. " … you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ…"

"But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy." Then we have in the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 3:16 where it says, "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"

God is telling us in no uncertain terms in the entire Bible that we are not to drink alcohol! Even though today the word 'wine' is not generally thought of as grape juice in our vocabulary at this time. However, it is in fact, as shown in this study to be a generic term in the Bible meaning both fermented and unfermented, depending on the context.

Many Christians today believe the teaching, that is going around, that says the Bible encourages people to drink a little alcohol. We have shown from the Bible and history that this teaching is just a myth (a lie)! There are even 'Evangelicals' who are speaking around the country today teaching that a little alcoholic wine is good for you.

I would say to them, first, you are going against the clear teaching of God's Word (in so doing leading many astray) and, second, if you want something healthy to drink, why not drink pure grape juice, which has only good medicinal effects on the heart and stomach?

Look at our link to Welch's Grape Juice Company: To use their own words they say of grape juice that it has, "Twice the antioxidant power of orange juice and 120% Vitamin C. It helps support a healthy immune system and a healthy heart. No sugar added – ever! Our grapes are sweet enough. Our Concord grapes are grown by our farmer-owners." [Without using harmful pesticides, I might add.]

Here is a quote from a film *Alcohol and Human Physiology* I have used in public in the public school library of films. (Synopsis) "The film begins with an illustration of the various aspects of social life that habitually entail the use of alcohol. 'Happy hours' are contrasted with devastating statistics and images of the abuse of alcohol, a mind-altering toxic drug.

"A physician then gives the facts of how alcohol affects the body. Beginning with the mouth, he reviews the major organs and body systems, and points out the damaging results of drinking. He discusses the ill-effects of alcohol on the digestive, circulatory, muscular, skeletal, urogenital, and nervous systems.

"The film uses real medical pictures, x-rays, microscopic images, and organs removed in autopsies to create a superbly convincing case against alcohol…The physician's narration and demonstration of alcohol-induced damages to the body are intertwined with dramatic testimonials from six recovering alcoholics; they briefly recount the particular physiological damages that resulted from their alcohol abuse—intestinal ulcer, fatty liver, pancreatitis, birth defects, muscular atrophy, and blackouts.

"In the conclusion, the film warns that psychosis is more frequent among alcohol abusers than among users of any other drug. Brain cells, once destroyed by alcohol, will never grow back again. Close to fifty-percent of the admissions to state mental hospitals and one-third of all admissions to hospitals are alcohol-related.

Ultimately, chronic alcohol abuse may lead to death." (Medical authenticity by Basil Clyman MD Veterans Administration Medical Center Sepulveda, California; Michael Meyers MD Coldwater Canyon Hospital North Hollywood, California; Jeffrey Miller MD Memorial Hospital Glendale, California; Frank Mohaupt MD San Pedro Peninsula Hospital San Pedro, California; Theodore Williams MD Los Angeles County Commission on Alcoholism.)

Days gone by preachers of God's Word warned people of the dangers of drink; today the church is leading the way, in some cases, in encouraging people to drink. Here is what used to be preached by godly men and women: This is the answer that the great Bible teacher R. A. Torrey gave when asked about 'Temperance' (abstinence). The question was: "What place do you give temperance in your meetings?"

He answered, "A very prominent place. One of the commonest and most destructive sins of our time is that of intemperance. It is doing more to break hearts and ruin homes than almost any other sin, so I constantly attack in my sermons the use of intoxicating liquors, and their sale. I urge upon Christians the duty of total abstinence for their own sake and for the sake of others…" (Practical and Perplexing Questions Answered R.A. Torrey)

Other famous Bible teachers and preachers who took a stand against alcohol were men and women like D. L. Moody, Henry Ward

Beecher, Sojourner Truth, R.A. Torrey, J. Vernon McGee, Dr. Henry M. Morris, and the list could go on and on. It is only in our time that Christians are compromising so much that they cannot even take a stand against something that has roots of teaching throughout history. The tour guide my wife had when she visited Israel said it was not always allowed even in Israel to drink alcohol as they do today.

Christians need to listen to God's Word and obey it! Where it tells us that we are priests and kings to our God, and that we are not to be drinking alcohol of any kind! Also, that we are to be of a sound mind, sober, ready and watching for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ!

"… Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish." (Ephesians 5:26b-27)

For more study on this subject read also: Genesis 9: 20-27; 19: 30-36; Leviticus 10: 8-10; Deuteronomy 29:19; 1 Samuel 1:13-16; Proverbs 4:14-17, 20:1, 23:29-35; Isaiah 5:11-12, 22-23, 28:1-2,3,7-8, 56:12; Jeremiah 35:1-6,18,19; Daniel 1:8-16; Amos 2:12; Habakkuk 2:5,15-16; Matthew 24:45-51; 1 Peter 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8.

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